

THE ⁵⁷⁹
^{12.2}
Modest Critick;

OR
REMARKS

Upon the most Eminent
HISTORIANS,
Antient and Modern. *sg*

With useful Cautions and Instructions,
as well for Writing, as Reading

HISTORY:

Wherein the Sense of the Greatest
Men on this Subject is faithfully Abridged.

By one of the Society of the Port-Royal.

L O N D O N,

Printed for William Witwood in Duck-Lane, and
Mrs. Feltham in Westminster-Hall, 1691.

Modelle C...

RE MA R K S

HISTORICAL

Antique and Modern

HISTORY

of the City of London

from the Foundation

to the Present Time

By Wm. Stukely

THE
PREFACE.

IT is as unusual for
a Book to be Pub-
lish'd without a *Pref-*
face, as for a man to
go abroad without a
Cravat ; Something
therefore must be said,
for Fashion sake: But,
because I am no way
addicted to Garb and
A 3 Dress.

The Preface.

Dress, what I say shall
be plain and short.

I have liv'd long enough in the World ,
to know , that a man
who ventures to make
any Work of his own
Publick , puts himself
into Extream Danger
of being attack'd on e-
very side , and by all
sort of People, as well
Learned as Ignorant ;
and these are the worst
of the two ; for a rea-
sonable man may be
sa-

The Preface.

satisfied with Reason, when a Fool will never be convinc'd of his Error. This has always made me unwilling to expose any thing of my own: But, having receiv'd, in the perusing of this little Book, both Pleasure and Profit, I thought it would be but matter of Gratitude in me, to communicate it to the Publick.

The Preface.

The Press having of late been prostituted to the Dull and Impertinent, it will be no great Credit for me to run in the Herd, much less to bring up the Rear of them that are in Print.

It is not therefore from Vanity, or the fond imagination of raising a Character, that I send this little Treatise abroad; but meerly, that others, who have the

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the same Notions with my self, may receive from it the same satisfaction that I have done.

It is not now, as heretofore, when he that could write, or read his Name, was thought therefore fit to be a *Parish-Clerk*: *Fortunatus*, and *Valentine* and *Orson*, &c. are no longer the Entertainment of Men. Nay, so ripe and pretending is the present Age, that
Wo-

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Women pass their time
in the best and solideſt
Histories.

But tho many read,
yet all do not read with
Judgment and Observa-
tion. Therefore they
may learn in reading this
Book, instructions how
to read and write too.

Now to do my ſelf
ſome Right, I muſt in-
geniouſly confeſs, there
are ſome Paſſages, about
which I am not fully ſa-
tisfied, as about the *Spar-*
tates

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tates and *Lacedemonians*, tho' the Author has *Polybius* on his side.

He has not done justice to the World, in not mentioning some late Historians; I mean, amongst the rest, *Thuanus* and *Sleidan*, who deserve not to be pass'd over in silence.

It is not to be wondered, that one of the *Romish Church* should so sharply censure the incomparable *Fra Paolo*,

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lo, whose *Judgment* and *Learning* carried him beyond their *Arguments*, and whose *Honesty* was above their *Calumny*: But the *History* of the *Council of Trent* is sufficient to maintain that Author's *Credit* against all their *Suggestions*.

As for the *King* of *France's* busying himself about the *Translating* of *Cæsar's Commentaries*, I must beg the
Au-

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Author's Pardon, if I cannot believe him, That *Monarch* having business enough of his own, without meddling with *Books*. And, I am confident, had He never done more than *Translating* of that Book, He had never had the Name of *Louis Le Grand*.

But, for these, and other such Faults, I will leave every Reader to take the same Liberty towards him that he has

The Preface.

taken with others. To
say the Truth, He that
sets up for a *Critick*,
offers a Challenge to
the whole World :
Therefore, not to be
remark'd upon, is the
last Affront that can be
put upon him. But I
forget the Complaint I
made of other People's
scribbling, while I thus
far continue my own.
Reader, accept this with
the same Mind that I of-
fer it; And so *Farewel.*

TO THE
READER.

I Have neither so good an Opinion of this Work, nor of my self, as to prefix my Name to it ; it being but a rough Draught of the Manner of writing History ; and that made upon a cursory reading of History. A Natural Diffidence I have of my self, makes me fear, lest Impatience or Precipitation has snatch'd
out

To the Reader.

out of my hands what could never remain too long with me, to render it self any way supportable. But that I may not disgust the Publick too much, by representing the Present I here make it, too mean and cheap: I shall ingenuously confess, That this Work is a kind of Abridgment of what has been written on that Subject, by the greatest Men of the first, and of the late Ages; That it is an Extract of what is most reasonable in Dionysius Halycarnassæus, in his Answer to Pompey, who ask'd his Opinion of the Greek Historians, and his Censure upon their different Characters: That it is a
Copy

To the Reader.

Copy of what Lucian has thought most judicious in that Admirable Treatise he made of the Manner of Writing HISTORY. In fine, That those Opinions I give in this Discourse, are not so much my own, as those of Francesco Patrici, in his Dialogues of Gyrolamo Marucci, Agostino Mascardi, of Paolo Beni, Lewis Cabrera, and others, Spanish and Italian Moderns, which have handled this Argument.

But, as perhaps, I have spoil'd their Thoughts by adding my own, I declare, That I do not make it a Point of

To the Reader.

Honour to my self, to persuade my Readers of it. (2) I do not impose Laws upon them, having neither Jurisdiction nor Authority to do so; they are, at the most, but Advices, which every one may follow at his own Discretion: But, being far from pretending to instruct any body, by a Title which shall seem vain to Modest Persons, I would willingly have all the World believe, that I am proud of receiving any Instruction from others. For, if I have not Wit and Learning sufficient, to be as Exact as so Important a Design requires; I have Judgement enough

(a) Cum iudicium meum ostendere, suam legentibus relinquam.

Fab. l. 9. c. 4.

To the Reader.

enough to be fearful of my self. But, that I may not take a False Modesty upon me, by suppressing my Name, I confess, that, in a manner, I conceal my self out of Pride: For I am too proud to shew my self, being sensible, that in an Age so Learned, and so full of Criticks, as ours is, a Man humbles himself, whenever he takes up the Name of an Author. In effect, their Rigour is so great, that no Merit, how well soever established, can escape them; And it looks like a kind of Presumption in a Man, to commit himself openly to the Judgement of

a 2 the

To the Reader.

the Publick , which daily becomes more rigorous ; and in an Age where Censure spares no body. It is also true , That there is so great a Wisdom in not endeavouring to seem capable ; and that there is so much good Sense shew'd in being Modest , that I could willingly have chosen to add , in those places where I give my Opinion, the May be of Aristotle, and the It seems of Tully , to be less Affirmative , and to speak my Mind with more Modesty , could that have suited with the Simplicity I use to explain my self. For , if a
Man

To the Reader.

Man has any Measure of Sense, he will hardly give his Opinion, in an Age so over-run with Positiveness in all things, as ours is ; and then, Who be to him that offers to decide.

Therefore this Discourse upon History is no ways like that of Lucian's, who praises good Writers only to detract from those that write ill ; biding, under the Approbation which he gives to Good Authors, a cunning Satyr, the more to involve the bad ones : That is not my Design, having no Grudge against any Man. I pretend only to open sensible Author's Eyes,

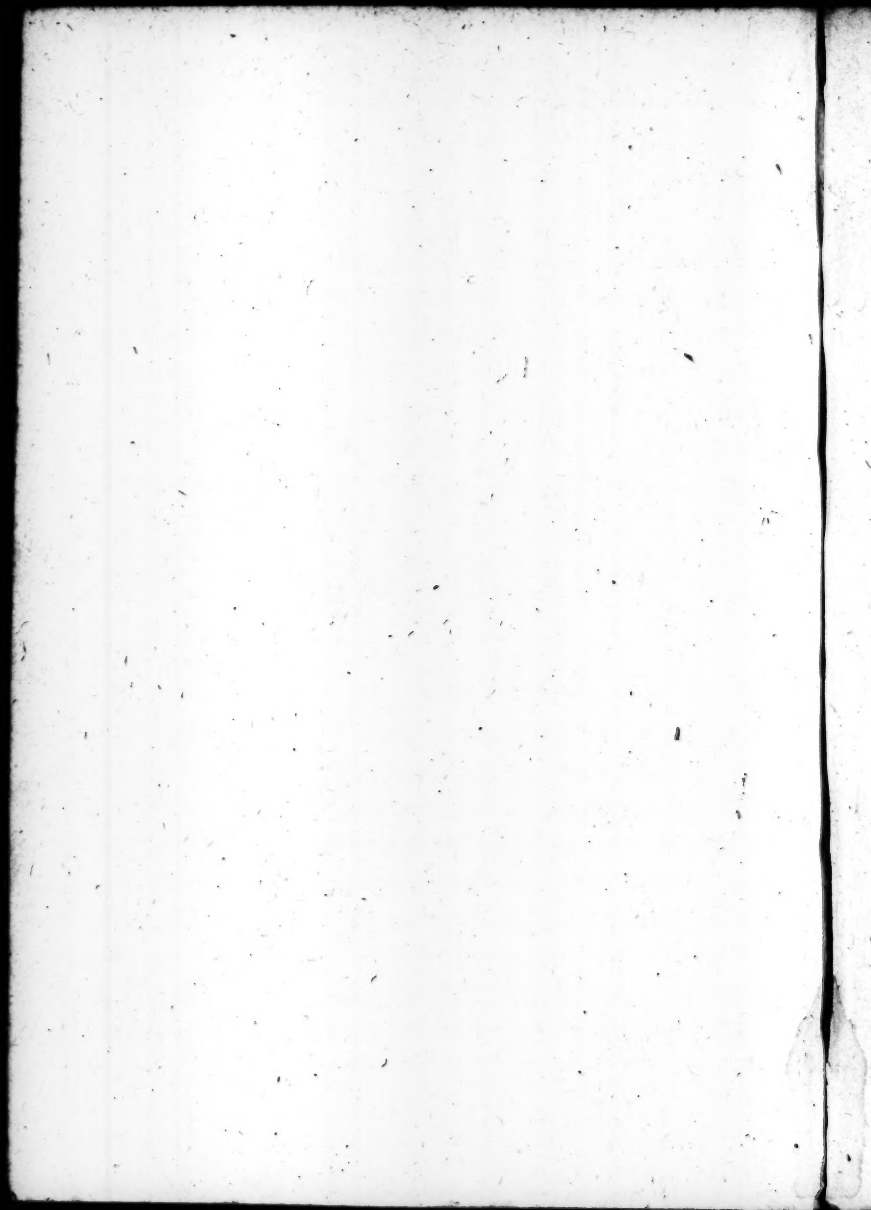
To the Reader.

Eyes, and shew them, that they ought to tremble when they go about writing History, which is so hard a thing to do well; and that the Judgment of Dionysius Halcarnassæus alone upon Thucydides, ought to cast a Terror in all Historian's Minds that are wise. In fine, to speak one Word about this Work, after I have spoken of the Workman, I declare, that good sense alone reigns more in those Instructions, than the Finesses of Policy; which is the thing curious men look most for in History, Policy being the Vainest of all Sciences; and that, good Sense,

To the Reader.

is the most universal and solid ground thereof. The Truth is, That I do not pretend to say all upon that matter, which no man can do: I shall, perhaps, say more another time, if this be kindly receiv'd.

THE



T H E
Modest Critick :
O R,
R E M A R K S
Upon the most Eminent
HISTORIANS.

THE Palate of this Age, it *The Design of the Author.* seems, grows very exquisite; for in all things, for the most part, we attain a good measure of Sense: We esteem that which is Real and Solid, and we can hardly now endure any thing that is false or frivolous. This is the Sentiment of all reasonable People, who make the soundest part of them that pretend to judge, tho' it be perhaps the lesser in number.

B

But

The Modest Critick.

But nothing shews that ripeness of Judgment better than the Disgust People have now for *Romances*, and any other thing that looks like them; so that this love of Truth and Reason, being a disposition to love *History*, let us make use of so favourable a Conjunction, to serve the Publick according to their Genius; let us bestow our pains in those things that can make us perfect in that Art; and comprehending the excellence thereof, let us make our selves acquainted with those things that are needful to attain it: For, what Spirit is not requisite for it? and what can we imagine finer than

(b) Pulchrum imprimis videtur, non pati occidere, quibus æternitas debeat. *Pl. l. 5. Epist.*

(b) *History*, which can do justice to *Virtue*, by perpetuating the Memory of Noble Actions? This is, in my mind, what can contribute to the Perfection, of which this kind of writing is capable, which will carry it above all other (if that love for Sense which establishes it self can but continue) in despite of the variety of tastes, which fancy and vanity endeavour from time

to time to introduce thro' false Ideas of fine wit.

I.

There is nothing harder than to say very precisely which is the best way of writing History. Every one ought to follow that which he finds most in Use in the Age wherein he writes, and that which is most conformable to those Peoples taste to whom he writes. But, is this enough to please Posterity? It is a Judge strict, severe, incorruptible, who gives its approbation to true Merit only: let us see then what we shall do to obtain its suffrage. When a man writes Nobly, Sensibly, Purely, Naturally; he pleases always in what Language soever he writes. Those are the universal Principles, which alone can fit every People's palate: for there are no other general Rules in the World, than those of Reason and good Sense. That is the reason why *Thucydides*, *Xenophon*,

How to write History.

phon, *Salust*, *Cæsar*, *Livy*, *Buchanan*, *Mariana*, and others like them, have always pleas'd, though they wrote in Ages, and to Nations of a different genius: a man is sure to please, if he writes as they have writ. For, what Grandeur, what Judgment, what Clearness, and above all, what Integrity shines in those great men's Works!

II.

What to write nobly is.

(c) Genus hoc scribendi incitarum atque elatum esse debere quis ignorat? *Cic. ad Famil. Epist. 7. l. 6.*

(d) Addidit Historiæ majorem sonum vocis Antipater, cæteri non exornatores rerum, sed tantummodo narratores fuerunt. *Cic. l. 2. de Orat.*

You must then resolve to write nobly, if you design to write *History*. For, (c) from the moment you speak to all the world, and to all Ages, you are endued with a Character which gives you authority to raise your voice, because then you speak to *Kings*, *Princes*, and to the *Grandeess* of all *Countries* and of all *Ages*; and you become, in some manner, the Master and Instructor of all mankind: (d) Nothing, then, is more essential to *History*, than to adorn your

discourse with a lofty strain, to speak as you ought. As an Historian quits the low and common Language, that so by the dignity of his Expression, he may answer the merit of those things he has to say: let him use himself to think nobly, in every thing that passes through his mind: let him study to give good weight to his thoughts, and strength to his discourse, by seeking with care all that can elevate and ennoble it, to give a mark of greatness to all that he says. The Patterns of that kind of writing, are, amongst the *Greeks* *Thucydides*, and *Livy* amongst the *Latins*. They are almost the only ones that have been able to keep up with an equal force and vigour, that greatness of Style, without sinking in *Mediocrity* and *Lowness*: and in that they have had but few Imitators. *Herodotus* has, by imitating *Homer* too much, tryed to raise his Style in places that requir'd elevation, as *Longinus* has taken notice. *Tacitus*, who for the most

part is only great, because he is short, is not a very good model to propose, for the greatness of his Style is not natural at all. In short, you must take great care to distinguish a false greatness from the true one. For, it is not in high terms, nor in lofty expressions; it is not in the puffing of words, nor haughtiness of the Discourse, that that nobleness of Style which *History* requires, ought to consist; in which *Ammianus Marcellinus*, *Lampridius*, and most part of the *Historians* of the low *Empire* have been deceived: It is in a high, but modest Expression; in a Discourse capable of sustaining the greatest matters and raising the least; It is, in fine, in that temper of greatness, which *Quintillian* attributes to true *Eloquence*. It is not enough for you to have Wit, (e) you must have a genius to write so, and to elevate what you say, by the choice of *Expressions*, and by the greatness of your *thoughts*. That gift is so rare, that if you separate from the number of *His-*
sto-

(e) Magna,
non nimia,
sublimis non
abrupta, fortis
non temeraria,
severa non tri-
stis, gravis non
tarda, lata non
luxuriosa, ple-
na non rumi-
da. *Fab. l. 12.*
c. 10.

storians, those that have not writ so, there will be but few true ones that will remain.

III.

To write sensibly, is to hit directly the thing you aim at, in what kind soever you write, without going from your Subject, or losing time by the way : It is to express things with a kind of *Wisdom* and *Modesty*, not abandoning your self to the heat of your *Imagination*, nor to the quickness of your *Apprehension* ; that is, when you can suppress that which is superfluous in the Expression, as those *Adverbs* and *Epithets* which diminish things, as they express them ; to let no *idle*, *insipid*, and useless thing remain in it : to cut off handsomely, what is not fit to be said, how fine soever it appears ; to allow ever less to fineness, than to Solidity ; not to shew Passion or Heat, where only cold Blood and Seriousness are requir'd ; to examine

(f) Delectus
Verborum ha-
bendus, &
pondera sin-
gulorum ex-
aminanda.

Fab. l. 10.

c. 3;

(g) *Luc. de*
confer. Hist.

min all your thoughts, (f) and mea-
sure all your words, with that ex-
actness of sense, and that exquisite
Judgment, which nothing escapes,
but what is exact and judicious,
It is, in fine, to have Strength en-
ough to resist the temptation
Men have naturally to shew their
Wit; (g) as that Impertinent Hi-
storian, who in the *Parthian* over-
throw by the *Emperour Severus*,
makes *Osroes* fly in a Den shaded
with *Lawrels* and *Myrtle*, where-
in he makes himself ridiculous,
thinking to be more agreeable,
which is the most slippery step an
Author can fall upon. And that
Spirit endued with Sense, that
wise Character which History re-
quires, is a kind of attendance up-
on ones self, which allows it self
no manner of Exaggeration, and
which takes endless Precautions a-
gainst those bold Imaginations;
which those, whose Spirits are
too quick or too fertile, are sub-
ject to; that they may say few
things in few words, as *Salust* does,
who holds *Councils*, gives *Battels*,
takes

takes *Towns*, conquers *Kingdomes*, with a compendiousness of *Discourse*, and an overflowing *Expression*, which is understood at half Sentences. *Tacitus* has all the Sense necessary to be short ; but he has not enough on't to be understood. The *Readers* grow sometimes impatient in that Author's Precipitations, which loses much of his agreeableness, and trying to compact in too few words, that which should have been more extended, falls into Obscurity. The desire he has of being too short, angers me, because of the small Instructions he gives me in things, which he does not unfold enough. *Polybius* and *Appian* sometimes say too much ; there is a sort of judicious silence, which makes one comprehend often the greatness of the things one speaks of, better than any words, when they are too weak. It is a Master-piece for one to suppress those things he cannot well say ; and the great Discretion in an *Historian*, is to make a distinction of what must be

be extended, or made short, that so he may give to every thing the just measure it ought to have, to make it acceptable. For *Livy*, tho' very large, is not tedious, because he is a Man of Judgment, even in his very Prolixity. But *Thucydides*, by sticking too close to Sense, sometimes falls in a kind of hardness and dryness, which one would hardly forgive him, was it not for the pureness and nobleness of his Style. So difficult it is to write very sensibly, without losing somewhat of the agreeableness which one might employ, if he had a lesser Wit. But let an Author imprint well in his Mind, that the greatest Ornament of his Work, is always good Sense; all the rest wearies one, but Sense never tires. 'Twas the good Sense of *Philip de Comines*, made him justly deserve the esteem and approbation of our Age, in despite of the bad and ill-digested Language he wrote in. But of all Modern *Historians*, none has written more sensibly than *Mariana* in his Histo-

ry of Spain. It is the Master-piece of the last Ages for that quality alone. In all that Work a Genius appears, which keeps him always from neglecting himself in choice Points, and from abandoning himself in those that are not so. And this judicious equality, which that Author always observes, tho' the matters he treats of be never so unequal, is little known to our late *Historians*. But the Art of thinking sensibly of things, is not sufficient, unless he has also that of expressing them purely.

IV.

An *Historian*, who thinks to commend his Book to future Ages, must think of (b) writing purely. Without that advantage, an *Historian* will be but short liv'd. For want of (i) purity of Style, so many Greek and Latin *Historians*, of whom Photius, and the other Library-keepers, have made mention, have perish'd in the general shipwrack of so many Books; and

To write purely.

(b) Historico sermoni decus conciliet, perspicuitas, proprietatesque verborum.

Beni. lib. 2. de Histor.

(i) Quid tam necessarium quam recta locutio? Fab. l. 1.

(k) Cura magna sentiendi & loquendi, sed dissimulatio curæ præcipua. l. 9. c. 4.

(l) Nihil est in Historia, pura & illustri brevitate dulcius. Cic. in Brut.

(m) In Sententia nihil absurdum, aut alienum, aut subinsulsum; in verbis nihil inquinatum, abjectum, non aptum, durum, longe petitum, Cic. de op. gen. orat.

and that, of a number almost infinite, of whom (k) *Vossius* speaks, none remain, but those that have writ reasonably enough to deserve to be read. You must not then pretend to write *History*, unless you very well know the Language you intend to write in, and, except you write purely. For, as soon as your design is to instruct, you ought to think how to express your self neatly, that you may be understood; for when a man speaks well, every one is willing to hear him: besides, one that speaks ill, never speaks any thing right; (l) and that clearness, which is the greatest charm in *History*, can only be found in a pure Style. That purity consists chiefly in the propriety of words; in the natural ordering of the phrases, and in the wise and moderate use of figures. The style ought not to have any thing (m) improper, strange, bold, hard, creeping nor obscure. *Herodotus* has that purity

of style, and has excelled in it, above all other *Grecians*, as *Cæsar* above all the *Latins*. The Wits of the following Ages grew rusty, and retain'd little of the purity of the *Ancients*. But *Quintus Curtius*, thinking to appear more polish'd, has lost somewhat of that great and majestick grace, which becomes *Salust* and *Livy* so well. It is true that he flourishes some places too much; as for example, the Description of the River *Marsyas*, in the beginning of the third Book; The Adventure of *Abdolonimus*, who, from a Gardiner, became King, in the fourth Book: Of the siege of *Tyre*, and of a great many others, where it appears an affectation of *Eloquence* little becomming the Gravity of *History*, which can bear nothing that is affected. Indeed, that purity of Elocution so necessary to *History*, ought to be supported by a great deal of Sense. For, (n) nothing is more fulsome than *Eloquence*, when empty of things, and which says nothing. It hap-

(n) Non debet quisquam ubi maxima rerum momenta versantur, sollicitus esse de verbis, *Fab. l. 8. c. 3.*

Ut monilibus & margaritis quæ sunt. Ornamenta Feminarum, deformantur

Viri, nec habitus triumphalis quo nihil augustius, foeminas decet, *Fab. l. 11. c. 1.*

(n) Ornatus omnis non tam sua, quam rei cui adhibetur conditione constat. *ibid.*

pens

pens that, sometimes, purity of Discourse too much studied in great Subjects, diminishes its greatness; as it appears in the History of the *Indies* by *Maffaus*, and in the wars of *Flanders* by *Cardinal Bentivoglio*. The one and the other have studied too much how to please by the Politeness of the discourse, not remembring, that Beautys that are sprucely attir'd smite least, and that the finest ornaments disguise a thing, whensoever they are excessive and disproportionate.

V.

To write with
Simplicity.

(o) Si oratio
perderet gra-
tiam simplicis
& in affectati
coloris, per-
deret & fidem.
Fab. l. 9. & 4.

You are also obliged to write with simplicity, to avoid that Pompous and that affected Air, which are both so contrary to that Character which is requir'd in *History*: because, whatsoever is great, ceases to be so as soon as it is strip'd of that simplicity; and that which is pure and great too, receives an accession of greatness, and becomes lofty. (o) Nothing also in-structs,

structs, and gets the publick applause, more than that simplicity of Style, so beloved of the Ancients, and so little known by the Moderns. All that which is exaggerated, seems false; and Nature, which you ought to have for your object, delights not in impertinent flourishes. But that you may exactly understand that simplicity which is so necessary to a great Style; you must consider that there are three sorts of it; A simplicity in words, as that of *Cæsar*; a simplicity in the Thoughts, as that of *Salust*, a simplicity in the Design, as that of *Thucydides*, so much valued by (p) *Dionysius Halicarnassæus*.

(p) In judicio
de *Thucydide*.

The *Moderns*, which have come the nearest to that Character, are, amongst the *French*, *Phillip de Commines*; *Guichardin* amongst the *Italians*, *Buchanan* in *Scotland*, *Mariana* amongst the *Spaniards*; the greatest part of the rest, seek only to maintain themselves by the Purity, Politeness, and other Ornaments of Discourse, when they have

have not a Spirit great enough to attain that simplicity; and they disguise the Truth, when they want strength to shew it naked. Happy is the Man that can attain it, when he makes writing his Business; those that are ignorant may understand it, at the same time that the intelligent are charm'd with it. But nothing is harder to get, than that plain and natural way, which makes the simplicity of the Style. A Genius extraordinary is requir'd to express things clearly, without dropping into a low and cold style. For at the same time that you endeavour after simplicity, you ought to dread nothing more than flatness: What is then, that admirable simplicity, which is the highest perfection of a great work, and wherein

(q) *Homerus*
breve[m] qui-
dem cum ani-
mi jucundita-
te, propriam,
carentem su-
perfluis elo-
quentiam *Menelao* dedit, quæ sunt virtutes generis primi. *Fab.*
l. 12. c. 10.

do's it consist? (q) It is to make use only of the most common and fittest words, but they must always be full of a great sense, as that Prince do's, to whom *Homer* gives

a brief

a brief Eloquence, agreeable, proper, without superfluity. (r) It is to think and speak just what you have to say and to think, without giving too much quickness to your expression, as *Strada* do's; and without giving too great a brightness to your thoughts, as *Grotius* did. It is to have your Sentiments ordinary and natural, not making so many Arguments and Reflections, as *Davila* in his *History* of the Troubles: for as soon as you argue so much, it is no more Nature that speaks, 'tis Art and Study: and those discourses so labour'd, smell of the Schools. (s) It is not to mix more Ornament in your discourse than the modesty of the truth can bear. It is to express that natural and free air of (t) *Xenophon*, which no imaginable affectation can attain. It is, in fine, to possess that marvellous talent of paring off the superfluous part of the Discourse, of which *Phocian* was so excellent a master; of whom, simple as he was, *Demosthenes* was wont to say, when he saw him ascend

(r) Exponere simpliciter sine ulla Exornatione Cic. l. 2. de Invent.

(s) Non dicere ornatius quam simplex ratio veritatis ferat. Cic. l. 1. de Orat.

(t) Xenophontis illam lucunditatem inaffectedatam, quam nulla affectatio consequi possit, usque sermonem Gratia finxisse videntur. Fab. l. 10. c. 16.

(u) *Plutarch.*

the Tribunal, as his Antagonist,
 (u) *Here's the sword which is going
 to cut off all the superfluity of my words.*

That you may well establish that Character, which, besides a great store of Wisdom and good Sense, requires much exercise and a great deal of Meditation; you must avoid the use of those Authors whose imagination is too full, that you may not fall in that torrent of false thoughts, boundless expressions, and those confusions which have but a glance of good sense, into which you will easily fall, if you have not an exact Sense, and an equal Spirit. You must propose to your self no other rule of that manner of writing, but the *Ancients*. And, among those, you must make choice of them which have most of this simplicity. (x) *Hermogenes* propounds *Theocritus* and *Anacreon* for great Patterns of it: and indeed nothing is opener and freer than what they have writ.

(x) *Hermog.*
 l. 2. de Ideis.

Herodotus seems to *Longinus* too bold. *Dionysius Halicarnassæus* finds, that *Thucydides*, tho' a great Master
 of

of that Simplicity, loads some of his Relations with too much of the matter of fact. *Xenophon* and *Polybius* moralize too much, and often hinder the stream of *History* by their Reflections. *Diodorus Siculus* mixes too much Learning in his Discourses. *Plutarch* may go for a great original of that simplicity we look after: for every thing he says relishes of it. *Livy* seems not to me more agreeable by all his other great qualities than by that. The stream of his *History* is like that of a great River which floweth majestically, as that of *Tacitus* resembles a deep and swelling River, subject to overflowings: he never keeps a tenour in his thoughts, but often is immoderate in his expressions for want of this simplicity. *Mariana* is one of the most accomplish'd among the modern *Historians*, because he regards it most. For the simplicity of Style cannot be found in great Subjects, without being accompanied with greatness and nobleness. Those are the qualities from

whence that first ground which *History* requires arise, and which we may, in a manner, call the first Elements of that beauty which it must have, and which ought to reign more in the mind, and in all the Character of the *Historian*, than in his Style and in his Discourse. Here are the other qualities which must be added to him to make him perfect, which I touch succinctly, without any other order, than that in which they present themselves to my mind. I begin with the *Matter* and the *Form*; that is to say, with that which is most essential to *History*.

VI.

The Matter in History.

(y) In rebus magnis, memoriaque dignis Historiam versari. Cic. de Orat. l. 2.

The Matter fit to exercise the Art of an *Historian* is a vast field, since it extends it self to all the Actions of men, viz. Peace, War, Councils, Negotiations, Ambassies, Intrigues, and all the several Adventures which may happen in this life. (y) *Cicero* requires two quali-

ties

ties in the matter of an *History*.

(2) That they may be great things, and such as may be fit to be made publick. None has explain'd better what choice an *Historian* ought to make of his Subject, than *Dionysius Halycarnassæus*, in the Preface of his *History*, and in his Judgment upon *Thucydides*, where he prefers the choice which *Herodotus* has made of his Subject to that of *Thucydides*, for the reasons which he brings. But, as falsehood often resembles Truth, it requires a great deal of discretion and sagacity, to make an exact distinction of it, to unriddle the true motives of important Actions, from their colours and their pretexts, and to choose your Argument wisely, which may become curious and fine by the circumstances well lay'd together, and by the order wherein you must reduce that which is too wide and far diffus'd, by restraining it within the natural extent of those limits it ought to have. When it is so reduc'd, let the *Historian* render

(2) *Historiam*
assuetam dis-
currere per
negotiorum
celsum
non humilium
minutias in-
dagare causarum.
Ammian.
Marcel. l. 26.

(a) Equidem
non affirmare
sustineo de
quibus dubito,
nec subducere
quæ accepi.
Curt. l. 9.

himself Master of it by a deep Meditation upon his Subject, which he ought intirely to understand. (a) But let him also be so exact and religious, as never to abuse the Credit of the Publick, by giving his own Conjectures for truth, or certain things for doubtful ones. Let him ascend, as much as in him lies, to the Spring of the Instructions he shall have given him, to make a just distinction of them. Let him never assure things upon common Reports, of which the Authors are always uncertain. Let him deliver them upon very sure Memoirs, and upon very faithful Relations. Let him not abandon himself too rashly to the *Historians* which have been before him, lest he should lose his way by following ill Guides. Let him make a great difference between those Relations that are interested, or suspected of Prejudice, and those that are not so. Let him always have a care of the Partialities of those which furnish him with Memoirs, because preoccupation can never make

make but false *Histories*. *Herodotus*,
 (whose *History* (b) Tully condemns
 as fabulous) wrote only upon ill
Memoirs, as *Josephus* pretends. *(b)* Apud He-
 rodotum sunt innumerabiles
 fabulæ. l. i. de
 (c) *Thucydides*, who had a mind to *Leg.*
 mend himself by avoiding that *(c)* Marcellin.
 fault, confines himself to the *History* in vita Thucyd.
 of his Time, not trusting any body,
 in writing only what he had seen,
 or what he had learn'd from Peo-
 ple worthy to be believ'd, and
 from *Memoirs*, which he collect-
 ed with great expences, not only
 from the *Athenians*, but also from
 the *Lacedemonians*, that he might
 be inform'd of both Parties. *Xeno-*
phon, *Polybius* and *Procopius*, have
 done almost the same thing. *Dio*
Cassius confesses in his *History*, that
 he had been ten years in prepa-
 ring the materials. (d) *Petrarch* as-
 sures us, that *Salust* went into *Africa*,
 that he himself might observe
 the Situation of the Places he was
 to speak of in his *History* of the
War of Jugurtha, not being willing
 to trust any other than his own
 eyes. For it is very important to
 be well assur'd of the ground you
 write

(d) *Salustius*
 marca trans-
 gressus dicitur,
 ut oculis suis
 crederet de
 conditionibus
 locorum. Pe-
 trarc.

(e) *Vopisc. in
præfat. Hist.*

write upon. *Lucian* makes the *Historian* of his Time pass for a fool, who wrote the *War of Armenia* upon common reports, having never seen any body who had been in *Syria*, where the *Battel* was fought: And (e) *Vopiscus* took the resolution to write the *History* of the Emperour *Aurelian*, only upon the assurance that *Junius Tyberianus*, Minister of State, gave him, to furnish him with good *Records*. But it is not enough to have had a share in the *Transactions* of affairs; there is also great need of an *Excellent Spirit* to deliver them well.

(f) *Hist. lib.
12.*

(f) *Polibius* says, that *Callisthenes* was eye witness of the *Action* between *Darius* and *Alexander*, when he gain'd the straits of *Cilicia*: yet for all that, there are a great many very gross errors in the *Description* of that important *Expedition*, and all because he was ignorant of the *Art of War*, and of the order which was observ'd in *Battels* in those Days. You must then, above all things, be very sure of
your

your Matter, which shall never be wanting to those that have Wit: but you may want assurance, if you do not well discern the things you relate. How many false Memoirs are found, because they are spoil'd by People that were interested? though nothing is more common than Materials for *History*, by reason that every thing may serve to it: We may say also, that nothing is scarcer than a sufficient assurance of them to fit them for it: and it is hardly found, because Prejudice occurs every where. (g) *Boccaline* upon that Subject deserves your esteem, when he advises you to write nothing but what you have seen, and not to make it publick before you dye. That way you'r sure of what you say, and there is no prejudice against it. But, take care above all things, to choose great Subjects, which can subsist upon their own stock: a great matter gives luster and weight to your words; and Art must play in small Subjects, and supply their weakness.

(g) *Boccal.*
in *Raggual. di*
Parnasso.

VII.

The Form.

The Form, which ought to be given to *History*, is that which is most essential to it. It is that which makes it Great or Little, and it is that from whence you take the Author's genius. You must then have an exalted Spirit, capable of great Idea's, if you will write well; that so, becoming a Master of your Subject, you may give your Matter what Form you please. It is upon that Model that *Livy* gives to his *History* a character of greatness, which is beyond all other *Historians*, by giving to all the Subjects he treats of, the colours their ground is capable to receive. Thus he gives to the last Kings of *Rome* all the Pride that an absolute Authority inspir'd them with; He changes the Spirit of the *Commonwealth*, by the austere Virtue of the first Consuls, by the Popular Motions of the *Tribunes*, by the austerity of the Government of the *Decemvirs*; by the lazy Deli-

cacy of the last Consuls; that he distinguishes each Age by the Genius which has been predominant in it, not confounding the different motions of that genius with the different circumstances of Times, which don't resemble one another, and that he sustains himself always by the great Images he gives of the things he treats of. *Tacitus* to the contrary, gives almost to all his Matters the same form: all is done there by Policy; the People he speaks of, have always a Spirit higher than others. It is not their Spirit which makes them move, 'tis that of the *Historian*, who having a spirit too compacted, gives always the same Air to his expressions, and the same turn to his thoughts: all things resemble one another. *Policy* is still made the cause and the result of all things. (b) If *Augustus* on his death-bed chose one to succeed him, he appointed an *Emperour* worse than himself, on purpose that he might be mourn'd for. If (i) *Tyberius* made *Piso* Governour of *Syria*, 'twas

(b) *Tyberium* ascitum, quod ejus arrogantiam introsperit, & comparatione deterrima sibi gloriam quaesivisse. *Tacit. l. 1. Annal.*
(i) *Dolabella* in absurdam adulationem progressus. *l. 3. Ann.*

(k) Suspectabat Syllam socors ejus ingenium callidumque simulatorem interpretando. l. 13. *Annal.*

(l) Temporibus Neronis sapientia pro inertia fuit. *ibid.*

'twas only to make him a Spy to *Germanicus*, by whom *Egypt* had been govern'd, and whose glory he did envy. *Dolabella's* flatteries displeas'd him, because they were too coarse. (k) If he banishes *Sylla*, 'tis because he thinks his silence a wise dissimulation. That *Emperour's* modesty; is nothing but a hidden Ambition; his favours are only snares; his moderation is nothing but pride, and his Religion is nothing but grimace. He reckons it a sign of the God's displeasure, that *Sejanus* should become Favorite of the *Emperour*, and be rais'd to be a Minister of State. *Arruntius* poisons himself out of Policy, that he might not fall into the hands of a master more brutish than *Tyberius*. He finds an agreeableness even in the *Emperour Claudius's* folly, and a great deal of Wit in the debauches and brutishness of *Nero*. (l) Some of the *Blockheads* of that Age and Reign, he represents as men of refin'd Prudence. In fine, all the characters resemble one another; Nature

Nature has no share in any thing, her Sentiments are always forc'd, and every where it is the same genius, which reigns by the impression of the *Historian's* Wit, and which has no great variety. *Mariana* runs on with a fuller career. The *Romans*, the *Carthaginians*, the *Christians*, the *Arabians*, the *Moors*, the *Mahometans*, make every one their Figure. The Wit of the Author mingles it self only with the other Spirits, to distinguish them according to their characters, opening always some new way as different as the Subjects he treats of requires. We may say also, that among the *Moderns*, no *History* is greater for its form than that of *Mariana*.

VIII.

Romance only pleases, *History* instructs : This is the essential difference between them ; this having no other end, than the instruction.

The End of
History.

(m) Alias in
Historia leges
observandas,
alias in Poe-
mate; illa ad
veritatem
quæque, in
hoc ad dele-
ctationem re-
ferri pleraque.
Cic. 1. de legib.

(n) O pulchra
ista pars, quæ
actiones vi-
tamque bene
format ac di-
rigit. *Tacit.*
Ann. l. 3.

structing of the Publick. (m) For, as it is not compil'd only for the present; its aim ought not to be limited to the time, which passes away, but to Posterity, which is Everlasting. What folly were it in a Man, that should think of nothing but diverting the People of the Age he lives in, when he may become useful to all Ages? Those are the Reasons (n) *Lucian* uses, to oblige an *Historian* to think of nothing but of being useful, by ruling the Hearts and Minds of Men by the Instruction he gives them. They are deceiv'd, he says, who pretend that *History* can be divided into two parts, the Useful and Agreeable; for an *Historian* ought to have no other prospect, than the profit People draw from a sincere and true Narration. If he intermix some thing that is agreeable, he ought not to corrupt the Truth, but rather to embellish it, and make it the more acceptable. And, to justify his Opinion, he shews the extravagant way of the *Historians* of his Age, which made them

themselves ridiculous by following other Principles. (o) *Herodotus* sought how to please those of the Age he wrote in, but his Sincerity was so run down in the following Ages, that it (p) made the Sincerity of the *Greek Historians* be suspected in *Quintilian's* Time. *Photius* makes mention of an *Historian*, which thought that his saying incredible things made him the more acceptable. And (q) *Seneca* complains, that in his Time there were *Historians* who pretended to make themselves famous by their fabulous Narrations. This was always pleasant to the People who delight in Fictions; but not to Men of Sense and Honesty, who love Truth only. In the following Ages, the *Arabians* stuff'd their Writings with so many Fables, that they spoil'd the greatest part of the *Greek Historians* of their Age, by the fancy then in fashion, of mingling surprising Adventures in all their Relations: they thought the only way to please the People, was to say incredible things. The same spirit

(o) *Græci historiarum plerumque poeticæ similis est licentia. Fab. l. 2. c. 4.*

(p) *Et quicquid Græcia mendax peccat in Historia. Juv. Sat. 10.*

(q) *Quidam incredibilium relatu commendationem parant: & Lectorem aliud acturum, si per quotidiana duceretur, miraculo excitant; & opus suum fieri populare non putant, nisi mendacio asperserint. Sen. l. 7. quæst. Nat.*

infected part of the *Modern Græcians*, which is the cause why the Account we have of those Times by the *Byzantine History*, is not the surest in the World, the Authors of it not seeming very exact; and when an Author writes by their *Memoirs*, he ought to take great Precautions against so false an Idea, to make People believe him, because the least falshood spoils all, and converts Truth into a Fable. Even the truest things ought not to be told, when they appear incredible or extraordinary, unless you give 'em an appearance, or, at least, a colour of Truth. It is what *Thucydides* does: and, though he saw *Herodotus* in so great an esteem, that the names of the *Muses* were given to his Books, he thought of nothing but of speaking the Truth, without minding to please the People. (r) *I had rather, said he, please by telling Truth, than be pleasant in telling Tales: because, if I be not pleasant, I may be useful; and perhaps, I might do hurt in being agreeable.* (s) Be then strongly perswaded

(r) *Lucian. de conser. Hist.*
 (s) *Utilitatem juvandi præ-tulerunt gratiæ placendi. Plin. præf. Hist. Nar. de Thucyd. & al. Hist.*

ded, that nothing is fine in *History*, but that which is real; and that, *Truth* being its greatest Ornament, an *Historian* that will please, ought to speak true.

IX.

Truth being the only mean by which *History* can surely instruct; Truth ought to make the chiefest Rule of *History*, as your *History* ought to be the ground of People's *Belief*. But where is it to be found? *That Truth is the only mean through which History comes to its end: and how it is to be found.*

Is there any thing in the World more hidden than Truth? For, besides the Clouds she is commonly encompass'd with, which render her sometimes unaccessible, she is wrap'd up with all the Disguises men's imaginations are capable of. And if the ordinary ignorance of short-sighted Writers is an obstacle to the knowledge of Truth; their little sincerity, nay, their fabulous way, is a far greater. For how often do we give wrong Judgment, through false Idea's which arise from our Passion, Interest, or

D

Pre-

Prejudice, which Error or Opinion are wont to inspire Men's minds? In fine, Truth being of a nature so unknown to Men, either through her own obscurity, or through the weakness of their Understanding, or for want of application; there is nothing harder than to make her known to the Publick without defacing her. And, as she is continually corrupted, and even prophan'd, through the baseness of her Adorers, the most part of the *Historians* being commonly Pensioners of Courts: You ought to set your self above hope or fear, as soon as you meddle with writing, that you may always dare to say the Truth. But, it is not enough to have a mind to say it, you must also make your self able, by seeking it in its purest original, by searching the Closets of the Learned and curious, and by consulting the Instructions of those who have had a share in businesses, to unravel what has been most mysterious in the most private intrigues.

You must, above all things, study Men in general; to discover their Spirit, to dive into their Secrets, to know the greatest weakness of their hearts, to penetrate their very thoughts, that you may not impose false ones upon them; and to judge of them by those natural and unforeseen Motions, which slip from them without their notice: That way you may discover the true sentiments of the Soul; the heart having no spare time to observe it self and to put on a disguise: for as soon as it reflects, it forces it self, as (*) *Tacitus* observes in *Agrippa*, and in *Octavia* Sister to *Britannicus*. For, in the moment that the poison which *Nero* sent him at the Banquet at which he died, seiz'd his Spirits; *Octavia*, as well as *Agrippina* shew'd Consternation in their faces: But, as *Octavia* thought to marry *Nero*, and *Agrippina* his Mother, a Woman naturally proud, had a mind to Reign, upon a politick Account they resum'd their Countenance; and that they might not anger the

(*) *Agrippina* pavor & consternatio mentis emicuit, quamvis vultu premeretur. *Octavia*, quamvis rudibus annis, dolorem, charitatem, affectus omnes abscondere didicerat. Ira post breve silentium repetita convivii lætitia. *Tacit. l. 13. Ann.*

Emperour, who was making sure of his Rival to the Empire; they force their Sentiments, hid their Sorrows, and continue their Supper with the same mirth, (whilst the Prince was expiring in the Antichamber) as if nothing had pass'd of that kind. There is a great Spirit in that Author, whose design is, to give an exact knowledg of those whose *History* he writes. But, our late Authors think but little of that, and that is the reason why we have so few true *Historians*. (u) There is a Temper of mind, fit to say things as they are, which is not a common one. It is one of the properties of *Thucydides*, the most faithful and sincere of all *Historians*: There is in his Works a Taste of Truth, and a discerning of Truth from Falshood, join'd to an exact Spirit, which acquir'd him the approbation and esteem of all people. (w) *Dionysius Halycarnassæus* praises him above all for his sticking to the Truth, pretending that he never said any thing against his Conscience; in which

(u) *Rerum gestarum pronunciator sincerus Thucydides. Cic. de Clar. Orat.*

(w) *Dionys Halyc. in Judicio de Thucyd.*

which he has excell'd *Herodotus*, whose whole design was to please People: for *Strabo* says, that he mingles Fables with his *Histories* on purpose to render them agreeable. (x) The *Historians* of the Low Empire became so great Flaterers, that their want of Sincerity made *Vopiscus* change the mind he had of writing the *History* of his Time. But, the Governour of the Town, who was a Favorite of the Emperour, took off that Scruple, in a Discourse he had with him, as they were once walking together, by shewing him, that the greatest *Historians* had been deceiv'd in many things. (y) *Pollio* tells us, that the same thing had happen'd to *Cæsar* in his *Commentarys*, for not having review'd his writings. If the greatest men are subject to err, what will ordinary ones do? (z) And if Truth does not always shew it self in its purity to extraordinary Spirits, how will it make it self known to small ones, who, through the quality of their *Genius*, can say nothing without altering

(x) Scribe securus, dicas quod velis, habiturus mendaciorum comites quos historiæ eloquentiæ miramur authores. *Vopisc. præfat. Hist.*

(y) *Asin. Poll. apud Florid. Sab.*

(z) Neminem Scriptorum, quantum ad Historiam pertinet, non aliquid esse mentitum. *Vopisc. ibid.*

the Circumstances, by diminishing or enlarging the objects? for there is nothing scarcer than an exact temper, fit to say things as they are: we say them as we conceive 'em; and we conceive 'em good or bad, according as our Imagination is: and, of many that have seen the same thing, there is not often above two that relates it alike, every one saying what he has seen, according to the Idea he has conceiv'd of it, and as his mind is turn'd. The quality then, I say, most requisite for an *Historian*, is a Spirit exact and faithful, in speaking the Truth in all its Circumstances, so as to deserve the People's belief. But it is not enough for an *Historian* to say what is true, he must give it also a fine turn: that turn is the Style; let us see which is the most Convenient for *History*.

X.

The Style is the Form of the Discourse, and the manner you write in: the fittest for every body is that which is most conformable to his genius, which ought to be follow'd, without forcing it; so that a Style mixt is always vicious. It is a defect of *Strada* in his *History* of the Low Country's, who by the clearness of his Imagination, and by his great Lectures, had fill'd his mind with different characters; and that mixture which is found in his manner of writing, how agreeable soever it is, diminishes its Perfection. (a) *Mariana*, who was of the same Society, has more strength, and is smother in his Style. But the fittest Style for *History* is that which has most of the Character of Truth, and wherein that natural light of Sincerity, which commonly accompanies the Truth, shines most: for, people easily believe things digested thus. (b) *The Style for History*

The Style fit for History.

(a) Verum ipsum inscribens sinceritate candoreque elucet. *Melch. Can. in loc. Theol. l. 11. c. 6.*

(b) *Luc. de confer. Hist.*

(c) *Quamquam* vineta sit, soluta videri debet oratio. *Fab.*

L. 9. c. 4.

(d) *Historia* non tam finitos numeros, quam orbem contextumque desiderat. *ibid.*

(e) In *Herodoto* omnia leniter fluunt: tum ipsa dialectus habet jucunditatem. *Fab.*

L. 9. c. 4.

(f) *Thucydides* præfraction, nec ita rotundus. In eo orbem orationis desidero. *Cic. in Bruto.*

(g) Obscurus est quia pressus. *ibid.*

(h) Tribus libris de bello civili *Cæsari* falso ascriptis nihil durius, nec candori *Cæsariano* minus conveniens

History, as *Lucian* says, must be clear and natural, because that clearness is the Rule of what it ought to say, as Truth is a Rule of what it ought to think. Its (c) Discourse must be free, though well compacted, and that it may have that freedom which makes it natural, it requires less number than *Turn*. (d) But because an *Historian* ought to read ancient Authors, to make himself a Style according to his capacity, he shall find it necessary to make his Observations in that Study, and so form to himself a Method fit for his Design. (e) *Herodotus's* Style is sweet, flowing, and agreeable. That of (f) *Thucydides* is nobler and greater, but not so natural; he has a rough way, which makes him obscure, and he has less number and less turn than *Herodotus*. (g) *Xenophon* has a tender and sweet strain. His Discourse, which is not unlike to pure and clear Water, has no fellow in Antiquity, except *Cæsar's*; for nothing was ever writ in *Latin* more clearly. (h) A Modern Critick's observation (who remarks

Flor. Sabin. in calum. long. lat.

marks some difference of Style in his Book of the Civil Wars, which he pretends to have not been written so purely as the Wars of the *Gaules*) goes beyond me: I have not knowledge enough to find that, and I am of *Suetonius's* Mind, who makes no difference throughout. I confess I am delighted with the Eloquence and Simplicity of that Author, no body ever wrote more clearly ; (i) but the Nobleness of *Livy's* Discourse charm my Spirits. That *Historian* has been read with respect in all Nations, for almost now two thousand years, upon the score of that Majestick way of speaking, which has been admir'd by all Ages. Nothing also fills my Fancy better than that admirable choice of Words always fitted to his Sentiments, and that expressing of Sentiments always conformable to the things he Speaks of. In a word, he is the Man of all, that has better attain'd to that Style *Cicero* advises one to follow in *History*,

(i) Genus orationis fufum & cum lenitate quadam æquabili profluens, sine judiciali asperitate, & Sententiarum forentium aculeis prosequendum. *Cic. l. 2. de Orat.*

And

And 'tis by that great Model that *Mariana*, *Buchanan*, *Paulus Æmilius*, *Paulus Jovius*, and all those who carried any Vogue after their Age, have formed themselves in the way of Writing *History*. *Tacitus* is not so fit; for that Lustre of his high flights is like Lightning, whose Brightness dazels, instead of making the Matter plain. *Paterculus* and *Florus*. have given a small Air, flourish'd and delicate, which pleases their Readers. The Writers *Augustæ Historiæ*, as *Ammianus Marcellinus*, *Lampridius*, *Spartianus*, *Julius Capitolinus*, *Vopiscus*, and the others, have degenerated in a cold and impure Style, which has nothing of that Noble Simplicity of former Ages. (k) *Salust* is great and elevate in his way of Writing, which causes *Quintilian* to compare him to *Thucydides*. (l) *Q. Curtius* has a polish'd and bright Style. And by those two Methods, which are almost the only two fit to be used, you may examine which of the two is the fittest for *History*; and that

Questi-

(k) *Salustius*
rerum Roma-
norum floren-
tissimus Au-
thor. *Tac. l. 3.*
Hist.

(l) *Salustio*
vigente ampu-
rata Senten-
tiæ, & obscu-
ra brevitæ fu-
ere pro cultu.
Sen. l. 11.
Epist. 114.

Question is the most important that can be made upon that Subject.

XI.

In a Question of so great a Consequence as this, which is not yet determined; 'tis enough for one to give the Reasons which may serve for the decision thereof, when a Man has not the Authority of determining it. (m) *Salust* has a Greatness in his Style; but some of his Expressions are harsh, which makes him look dry in some Places, because he had form'd himself by the rudeness (n) of the Remains of *Cato*; which gives to his Discourse a Gravity which looks like Severity. And contrariwise, none is more polish'd than *Q. Curtius*; It is an admirable Flower of Expression, which pleases Men of Wit, but the business is, that we must examin whether the stiff Stile of *Salust*, hard as it is, be not wholsomer and fitter for History, giving as it does Weight,

Which is the properest for History, the Great or the flourish'd Style?

(m) *Verba excerptis Salustii ex originibus Catonis. Suet. in Aug.*

(n) *Salustius Scriptor seriz et severæ orationis. Aulug. l. 17. c. 18.*

(o) *Homer.*
Odysſ. l. 9.

(p) *Hermogen.*
de Idejs, l. 1.
c. 5. & l. 2.
de invent.

Weight, Strength, and Greatneſs to the *Diſcourſe*. Is it not rich? and don't we find ſometimes in that hard and ſevere *Stile*, that agreeableneſs of which *Demetrius* the *Phalerian* ſpeaks; which (o) *Homer* has ſo well expreſſ'd in his *Odysſea*, about the Adventures of *Polyphemus*; where *Demetrius* pretends, in his *Book of Elocution*, that he is the firſt *Author* of it; that is to ſay, thoſe Graces which have nothing ſoft nor effeminate, and which are agreeable without being affected. The ſame *Author* quotes many Examples of it, taken out of *Xenophon*, who has the *Art of making things Pleaſant*, which of themſelves are not at all ſo. Herein that ſevere *Stile* properly conſiſts, which (p) *Hermogenes* prefers to a ſoft *Stile*, when he ſays, that a meer naked *Narration* has often more Strength, than a *Narration* which is adorn'd and flouriſh'd; becauſe a ſevere *Style* may have ſome Greatneſs, and a ſoft *Style* can only have a *Mediocrity*. That is alſo the Rea-
ſon

son why he reckons good Sense, (tho' never so naked) amongst the qualities of the Noble and elevated Style. This was, says he, the Character of *Pericles*, upon which *Demosthenes* form'd himself to that strong and fierce *Eloquence*, wherein he has excell'd: *Hiperides*, says he, in another place, is great tho' careless: his Style is rough and dry, but it is noble and elevate; (q) for, that *Austerity* of Stile, which was the true Character of the *Greeks*, is nothing but (r) a true and exact Sense, and a just and correct Reason; which, without stopping at a shew of Brightness, pursues *Solidity*. (s) It has nothing false in its Sentiments; all its Attention is bent towards a Sobriety of *Discourse*, which is nothing but Sense and Simplicity. *Plutarch* also attributes that Style to *Demosthenes*, which *Dionysius Halycarnassæus* does not distinguish from the great and elevate. It is, in fine, that strength of Expression, which alone gives to our *Discourse*, *Nobleness* and *Majesty*, by which

(q) *Austerus græca consuetudine Cornel. Fron. de differ. vocum.*

(r) *Artis severæ si quis amat effectus, mentemque magnis applicat, prius more frugalitatis lege polleat exacta. Petr.*

(s) *Si juvenes verba atroci stylo effoderent, jam illa grandis oratio haberet majestatis suas pondus. Petr.*

(r) *Historica locutio, ubi munditiem retinuerit, majora ornamenta non requirat, simplex, pura, naturalis sit, nec Atticum fictitatem referre possit.*

Beni. L. I. de Hist.

(u) *It is a small History in French.*

which it becomes great and solid. Hence it is that *Cæsar*, tho' unaffected, has something Nobler in the Simplicity of his Discourse, than *Tacitus* with all the Pomp of his Words: and there appears a kind of Carelesness in the *Antients*, which is worth all the Diligence of the *Moderns*. (t) I don't say, but that a flourish'd Style may be of use in small *Histories*, which have not ground enough to support themselves without help. (u) The *Princess* of *Montpensier* ought to be written with all the *Eloquence* Art can allow; but the *History* of the War of *Paris*, and of the Late Troubles, ought to be written with a greater Air; Small Subjects require Finess, great Ones Strength and Dignity. Let *Paterculus* be prettily adorn'd in the Character he took; but *Livy* ought to be great and serious: small *Beauties* ought to be finely attir'd to shew themselves; but great ones have no need of it, because they bear a good weight of themselves. Besides,
Truth,

Truth, which is the Soul of *History*, becomes suspicious, as soon as it is too much adorned; and Carelesness has more an Air of Sincerity. This is what was to be observed upon the Style in particular, after the general Notions I have given thereof: but as it is of use only in *Narration*, we'll examine in what manner it ought to be.

XII.

History being, properly speaking, nothing but a (w) *Rehearsal* of things past, and in the same order as they came to pass, ought also to be a continued *Narration*. (x) Therefore, as it hath nothing more essential than the knowing how to relate well, so, nothing is more difficult. (y) For it is a great Art to fix an unconstant and fickle Reader's mind. What wisdom does it not require to mannage every where those colours that are necessary to give the resemblance to things, and to mix constantly with them those

The Narrations

(w) *Historia est narratio reſ gestar, per quam ea quæ facta sunt dignoscuntur. Isidor. l. 1. Orig.*

(x) *Expositio præteritorum Temporum.*

Fab. l. 4. c. 2.

(y) *Custodia fidelis rerum gestarum. Tit. Liv. l. 6. Annal.*

(2) Dare orationis varios vultus. gaudent enim res varietate. *Fab. l. 9. c. 2.*

those features, those light touches, those graces, that warmth, that quickness, which hinders a Narration from languishing? how dexterous must an Historian be, to use both Art and Wit, in what he says, yet not to seem to do so; (2) And by all the variety of Expressions, Figures and Thoughts, to adorn every part of his *History*, without the least smatch of Ostentation? what knowledg ought he to have, to discern what must be said, and what let alone, to speak and hold his Peace, to dwell no longer than is fit upon the Points he treats of; to explain things at large, or by degrees, as necessity or a good *Decorum* requires; to enlarge or shorten them; to retrench, by a felicity of Expression, those *Topicks*, which otherwise would be insipid, and never to weary the Reader by too great an uniformity? In fine, what a Judgment to separate carefully that which is becoming from that which is not Decent? for upon that chiefly runs all the Beauty of a Narration,

on, and all the Grace of *History*. But a Narration is perfect whenever it has nothing of Superfluity. This is, in a word, the utmost perfection it is capable of being brought to. The Rules lay'd down by *Cicero* and (a) *Quintilian* say no more: after them I have nothing to say. For when once the Superfluities are cut off, the Circumlocutions which are not useful, the feigned *Descriptions* which are onely fit to make a shew, and all the vain Ornaments of the Discourse are suppress'd, every thing comes close to its point. (b) The Vigour, the Strength and the Dignity, all support each other, without any Flatness. In that (c) *Thucydides* out-did *Herodotus*, who is too big in some places, where he gives himself too much to the fineness of his Imagination. (d) *Salust* is of a Character exact and short. He is properly commendable for the quickness and torrent of his Discourse. (e) That is it which animates him, and makes him so lively. *Cæsar's* Nar-

(a) *Circumcisa expositio rei quæ supervacuis caret. Fab. l. 4. c. 1.*

(b) *Densus, brevis, semper instans sibi comitatis affectibus. Thucydides. Fab. l. 10. c. 1.*

(c) *Thucydides verbis aptus & pressus. Cic. l. 2. de Orat.*

(d) *Immortalem illam Salustii velocitatem consequutus Livius. Fab. l. 10. c. 1.*

(e) *Illa Salustiana brevis, qua nihil apud aures eruditas perfectius esse potest, captanda. ibid.*

(f) *Livius* in narrando mira jucunditatis, clarissimi-que candoris, ita ducuntur omnia tum rebus, tum personis accommodata. *Fab. l. 10. c. 1.*

ration is admirable for its Purity and Eloquence, but it is not quick enough; and he wants of that Strength which he found too abounding in *Terence*. (f) As for *Livy*, he has a way of reherſing that is very taking, by that Art he has of mixing in his Narration ſmall things with great ones; be-
 cauſe great ones, when too much enlarged, tire the Reader by rea-
 ſon of the great Attention they require, and ſmall ones reſreſh him: it is with that ſame Method that he varies his Adventures; that he interchanges ſad things for delightful ones; that Mannages his Light and his Shade with a wiſe and judicious Temper, that ſo he may keep the Reader in tune by that Variety. For a Narration becomes inſipid, as ſoon as it wants diverſity of Accidents, Adventures, Figures, and Expreſſions. You muſt even allow ſome intervals to things, that your Reader may take breath, and not intermix your matter by too great a confuſion of things. It is a fault that *Dionyſius Hal-*

Carneassus judges (e) *Thucydides* guilty of, in the third Book of his History, where he so mixes the several Interests (b) of the *Athenians*, *Lacedemonians*, and of the other People of Greece, that he confounds, in a manner, the very appearance of things, by a Narration too much loaded with Matter: and this failure is incident to those of a copious and fluent Invention. Tho' the (i) order of Times be the most natural to a Narration, because it unfolds things pass'd; there is nevertheless an order of Reason in ranging *Events*, which ought particularly to be the study of an *Historian*. It is only by that secret Order that you may endear your Reader, so as to imprint your own Sentiments on his Mind, when you shew him Men acting naturally as they ought: and when you shew him their Manners, their Thoughts, their Designs and their Motives, as they are in a kind of dependency upon each other in the same natural order, which joyns them well together.

(e) *Thucydides*
creber rerum
frequentia. *Cic.*
l. 2. de Orat.

(b) *Dionysius*
Halyc. tractat.
de judic. *Thucyd.*

(i) *Rerum*
ratio ordinem
temporum de-
siderat. *Cic.*
l. 2. de Orat.

(k) In rebus magnis, memoriae dignis, consilia primum, deinde actus, postea eventus expectantur, *Cic.*
l. 2. de Orat.

(l) *Longin.*
c. 18.

(k) An *Historian* that can well put those things together, is a great Man; that is the thing which pleases, and not those extraordinary Events which People run after for want of Judgment; for nothing is more taking than to see men act in that Order; that alone, when all comes to all, fixes the mind. *Livy* excell'd in that, because he follow'd closely that Order, by drawing the Thread of his *History* with a connexion of Discourse, and by weaving together always those Actions that are of an equal size. (l) *Longinus* has well observed, that *Thucydides* breaks the Order of things, to surprize the Reader by that disorder, by bringing in unexpected Occurrences in his Narration: He tells even sometimes things past in the present time, shewing them as tho' they were passing actually, which makes the Reader more attentive, and affects him most. *Tacitus* is of a soaring Spirit, who does not say things in order. His great sense, shut up in the compass of a few words, has not

an extent proportioned to his Reader's minds, who are often overwhelmed with it: and having not a natural strain in what he says, he scarce ever fits his words to mens Notions; he does not instruct well: For Example, when on the occasion of the *Papian Law* he explains the ground of the Laws; or in another place, he speaks of *Asylums*, he does not return to the origin of things; he shews nothing clearly, or he does it ill; as when he explains the *Religion* of the *Jews*, l. 5. of his *History*; his very Style is not fit for it, which is a great fault in an *Historian*, whose chiefest Profession is to instruct. After all, a Narration is good (which way soever it is digested) when it pleases.

XIII.

The great Art of a Narration, *Transitions.*
and one of its chiefest Beauties,
consists in the Transitions. In ef-
fect, those fine and natural turns,

those happy passages from one Subject to another, make the stream of a Discourse engaging: those insinuating ways lead the mind of a Reader from one Object to another, and shew him a great deal, without tiring him: In fine, all that admirable Oeconomy of the Transition, is that which is most delicate and spritely in the Narration, which seem always constrain'd, and never easie or natural without that Art. It is not enough to speak well to attain it: you must be eloquent; you must be Master of your Subject, and to know the grounds and consequences well; for the fittest Transitions ought to be much more in things than in words. So that those Excursions from Kingdom to Kingdom, from Nation to Nation, from Age to Age, without Method, and without Management, are no way opportune to a well digested *History*, wherein all things ought to be well laid and compacted; as in a great *Palace*, where nothing ought

ought to be scatter'd or irregular; for the compactness, and the proportion of its Apartments, make one of its greatest Beauties: So *History* is like a Body, compos'd of its Members by the Natural Union; in which *Saunders's History of the Schism of England*, is very defective, amongst Moderns, as that of *Florus* and *Paterculus*, amongst the Ancients,

(m) *Xenophon's Language* is very well knit, sweet and flowing, yet *Livy* still exceeds him, his Narration being of one even continued thread; his Transitions consist less in words than in things. *Salust* is not so well knit; *Tacitus* is still less; his Connexions are forc'd, and the stream of his Discourse much interrupted, which surprizes the Reader, who must sweat, if he will follow that Author. The most difficult Transitions are those which are found in the commonest things; for an Author ought to sustain himself with strong Expressions, where the matter is but small,

(m) *Xenophon fluens & fine salebris oratio, Cic.*

and must find a way how to couple things that otherwise have no Union at all. It is in those places he ought to shew all his Skill. The Reader's mind is so tender, that an *Historian* cannot always turn it as he pleases. But he must be conducted from adventure to adventure, by Connexions well cover'd for Order's sake. For, in a word, he often has a foolish pride, and flights, which render him untractable. But there is need of a great deal of Art to vary those Transitions, which never ought to be like one another, to give always new Ideas to the Reader, by not shewing him always the same Objects: It is in this an *Historian* must lay out his Industry; for herein the gracefulness of a Narration consists, which alone can render it acceptable and delightful.

XIV.

If a Narration becomes agree-
able by the Transitions, it be-
comes credible by the Circum-
stances. For nothing engages one
more than a Fact cloath'd with
good Circumstances, which tho'
dark and obscure of it self, by
the particulars becomes palpable,
clear, sensible and evident; and
as the progress of great under-
takings, and of Affairs of im-
portance, is seen only by bring-
ing them into a good order by
the several degrees of their Cir-
cumstances; so the Art of ex-
plaining the Truth in all its De-
pendencies, by unravelling what
is particular, making one of the
great Ornaments of *History*, a
Writer ought to study it with
all imaginable care. Here fol-
lows the Observations one may
make of it. The great Secret is,
to know how to make a wise
and judicious choice of the Cir-
cumstances

cumstances that are capable of giving a great Idea of things, to imprint in them that Colour which can give them credit, and so make way for them to possess the mind. And this will be obtain'd by a concourse of great and small Circumstances mixt with Dexterity, when well chosen. Great Circumstances give some admiration, and small ones pleasure, provided they are well chosen, and not exaggerated. But tho' an Action, which is not exactly reported, makes no impression, you must nevertheless shun those Expressions of low and frivolous Particulars, which make a Subject worse; for you become childish, and even ridiculous, by sticking too close to little things; As that impertinent Historian (n) *Lucian* speaks of, who gives a very particular Description of the *Parthian's* Veste, and of the *Roman Emperour's* Shield, when he describes the Fight. Others, adds he, not thinking of Essential things, lose time in things not useful;

(n) *Luc.* in
Conser. Hist.

useful ; as he, who after having spoke by the by, a word or two of the *Battel*, which made then the Subject of his Discourse, stops to relate the Adventures of a *Moorish Knight*, the most extravagant in the World. So *Procopius*, in his secret *History*, forgets the Circumstances necessary, and rehearses what is needless. You must then, in the recital of any Action of Consequence, know well how to lay the Circumstances which are to make the thing plain, and to sustain it in its light, by distinguishing the Essential from that which is not so. The most accomplisht pattern we have in *History* of a great Action, told in all the Circumstances capable of giving it weight and splendor, is *Hannibal's March* into *Italy*, as it is written in the 21st Book of the Annals of *Livy*. It is, in my judgment, the most perfect part of his *History* ; and there are few things of that strength in Antiquity. A greater design never enter'd into a more
ex-

extraordinary mind ; and nothing was ever accomplish'd more cleverly. The Argument was, *Hannibal's* coming out of *Africa*, marching through *Spain*, over the *Pyrenean Hills* ; crossing the *Rhone*, at his very mouth, a River vast and swift, whose Banks were cover'd with so many Enemies ; his opening himself a way through the *Alpes*, where no man had ever pass'd before ; travelling upon *Precipices* ; disputing at every step with People that lay in Ambuscadoes, in continual Filings, amidst the Snow, Ice, Rain, Torrents, defying Storms and Thunder ; making War with Heaven, Earth, and all the Elements ; drawing after him an Army of a hundred thousand Men of different Nations, and all jealous of a General, whose Courage they were not able to imitate. The Souldiers Minds were possess'd with fear, *Hannibal* alone remains unshaken, the danger which encompasses him, abates the Courage of all
the

the Army, but never disturbs his Mind. All is drawn in a Relation of horrid Circumstances; in every word of that *Historian* danger is exprest; never Picture was better finish'd in History, touch'd with livelier Colours, and with bolder strokes. Nothing also is better adorned with Circumstances in (o) *Tacitus*, than that Feast the Empress *Messalina* made to shew her Love to *Silius*, her Gallant. All the Ceremonies appear'd as tho' it had been Vintage-time, that Season favouring the Feast; Mirth, Pleasure, frolick and lascivious Debauchery, are all exprest'd with the fineness of an exquisite Eloquence; and the Relation thereof is particulariz'd succinctly and sensibly, and made throughout in such a manner, as speaks Life and Spirit; and nothing is more judiciously plac'd, rendring by this lively representation *Messalina's* Death, which follows after more Tragical and full of Horror. In fine, there are happy Circumstances, which
give

(o) *Tacit. l. 24*
Annal.

give an agreeableness every where, where they are apply'd; but you must understand them well, to know where they must be apply'd. Things become often greater by their Circumstances, than they do by themselves. Let us then look into those Circumstances which can both instruct and please, and keep the Reader from dozing. Let us imitate *Davila*, who is so taking, by the Art he has duly to cloath what he says with proper Circumstances; yet great Relations weary the Spirits; so let us make a judicious distinction of the Circumstances Necessary, and of Importance, from those that are not so. Let us consult *Lucian*, and his Discourse upon History; he is a great Master in that. But to make a compleat Narration, we must joyn to the Circumstances of its things, the Motives of its Actions; for Motives well touch'd make a Narration as curious, as the Circumstances make it likely.

XV.

To tell Men's Actions without *The Motives*, speaking of their Motives, cannot properly be called to write *History*. It is just like a *Gazette*, where the Author contents himself barely to report the Events of things, without going up to their Spring. As *Cæsar*, who gives merely his Marches, and his Encampings, without telling their Motives; every thing in his Narration being too plain and open; tho' tis true he writes only *Memoirs*.

It is then that curious rehearsing of Motives which cause Men to Act, by which alone *History* it self becomes delicate, and sustains it self chiefly in important Affairs. To say things as they are pass'd, without going to their beginning, is properly to stop at the outward part of Things. Reason will have it, says Cicero, (p) that as in Affairs,

(p) Rerum ratio vult, ut quoniam in rebus magnis consilia primum, deinde acta, postea eventus expectantur; in rebus gestis declarari, non

solum quid actum, aut dictum sit, sed quomodo, & cum de eventu dicatur, ut causæ explicentur omnes, &c. l. 2. de Orat.

the Design precedes the Execution ; The Historian gives an Account, not only of Events ; but also of Causes ; and that in relating what has been done, he explains how, and for what Reason it was done. Tacitus says almost the same thing ; that it is important for History, not only to tell the Events of things ; but to discover the Ground and Principles of them ; and to touch upon the Motives thereof ; (q) by this an Historian distinguishes himself, and makes himself considerable ; and nothing is more pleasing in a Narration, than the Explication of what is secret, and of Importance in those Peoples Designs and Intentions, whose Actions it relates ; and History having nothing more commendable than this, all the little Historians, even of the smallest Credit, have endeavoured to excell in that way. For, nothing strikes more upon the Curiosity of men, than this, by which they are made to discern what is more concealed in mens Minds ; that is to say, the secret

(q) Ut non modo casus eventusque rerum, sed ratio etiam, causaque noscantur.

14. Ann.

secret motions which make them act, even in their ordinary Undertakings. It is only by going up to the Cause, that you will see the minds of those you speak of; that you'll discover the Spirit which makes them act what they are capable of, and that you'll find the Truth by searching deeply into their Intentions. But with how many Falshoods are *Histories* fill'd upon this fair Pretext? And, into how many Errors do unjust, false, and interested *Historians* daily fall, which abandon themselves to their Conjectures; distribute their own Imaginations to the Publick, to express the Designs of those whom they speak of? As for Example; That *Pericles* caused the War in *Peloponnesus*, because he lov'd *Aspasia*: That *Xerxes* carry'd that dreadful Army, *History* tells us, only to eat Figs: That *M. Anthony* lost the Empire, meerly because he would not part with *Cleopatra*: That *Francis* the First of *France*, carry'd his Armies over

F into

into *Italy*, only upon the account of the faire Lady named *Claricea*. There is nothing more ticklish and difficult than to search into mens hearts, and thence to guess or discover what they think; for an Author will tell all he knows, and all that comes into his mind, rather than fail telling the Truth. It is one of the greatest failings in *Davila*, whose Discourses are otherwise just enough; but his conjectures in the motives of the Actions he relates, do not prove very true, if we may take the Truth from their Fathers. Not but that, after all, an Action very well clear'd to its very Motives, and a Secret well penetrated, might give a great Idea of the *Historian's* Ability, and make us judge, that he speaks like a man well inform'd, and looks very well in *History*.

(r) *Haud facile animus rerum provider, ubi officium odium, amicitia, ira, atque misericordia. Caesar. apud Salust. in Catil.*

But that an Author, (r) who pretends to guess, be always up-

on his Guards against prejudice ;
 that he hearkens neither to his Affection nor his Hatred ; to avoid Artifice , and those Colours men are prompt to give to things , in favour of that side he is prejudic'd for ; that he inserts no falsehoods , to justify his Conjectures , and to make things agree with that Air he is pleas'd to give them ; that he neither diminish nor exaggerate any thing , as *Tacitus* , who casts a Poison every where ; or as *Paterculus* , who strows every thing with Flowers. Let him not shew men worse affected than they are , as *Herodotus* does , when he says , that the *Persians* were call'd into Greece by the *Spartiates* , because they could resist the *Lacedemonians* no longer , nor suffer them , as (s) *Plutarch* reproaches him ; (s) *Plutarch* de *Herod.* let him not also cover an unjust dealing with a good intention , Malig.
 as *Callias* of *Syracuse* ; who justifies all the Actions of *Agathocles* , because he did him some good , as (t) *Diodorus* takes notice ; nor as (t) *Excerpta Paulus Jovius* , in respect of *Cos-* Const. ex *Dio-*
 mus *doro.*

mus de Medicis, not long since. There are in all *Historians* mistakes of that kind, because they are few that have a mind steady enough to resist their Prejudice. But tho' the motives in great men ought regularly to be better and greater than their Actions; for the motives depend upon them, but the events do not: yet it is but a small mistake, as Noble men are, to mix in their Counsels, and in their Deliberations part of the pride and of the weakness they are subject to: for oftentimes it is only through some impertinent and ridiculous motives, that the most part of men are determin'd. There is an infinite number of Examples thereof, which I leave, that I may not exceed bounds upon that matter. You must, above all things, know well the Vanity, the Malice, the Ignorance, and the Folly of mens minds, which always conforms to their Principles, to know well the bottom of their Intentions, and search his Weakness,

ness, which is the great Principle of Malice ; and above all things, not to be ignorant, that the Laziness of most great men, in examining the bottom of Affairs, and the impatience they have to judge of them upon what the Conduct most essential to their Affairs depends. It is them we must necessarily know, for being, as they are, the Great Actors upon the Stage of this World, all things, for the most part, are rul'd by their Extravagancies: But it does not follow, that if we have done once well in this way, by chance, we should be able to do it always. There are *Historians* in this Age, which have ruin'd their Reputation by too great an itch of mingling their Conjectures with all Events, and imposing their own Conceits upon the *Publick* instead of *History*; as *Herrera*, who says, that the Duke of *Parma* did not do the best he could against the *Hollanders*, to manage them with Policy. There is nothing more contrary to an

Historian's mind, (who ought to be sincere and faithful) than those conjectures which are built in the Air, without any Foundation, and all Discourses groundd upon many conjectures, are either uncertain or frivolous. This is what must be observ'd in Transitions, in Circumstances, and in the Motives wherein the chief Art of a Narration consists. This is also what must be regarded in its other parts, which are the Figures, the Passions, the Descriptions, the Speeches, the Reflections, or the Sentences; the Characters of Persons, the Digressions, and all that can enter in the Oeconomy of the Discourse which *History* ought to be made of.

XVI.

Figures.

History makes use of Figures only to animate it self: The Speaker, who has a mind to impose, speaks always by Figures, that the Springs of his Art may play

play the better : but the *Historian*, whose mind is only to instruct, ought to use them in another way. That very Simplicity which Truth requires in *History*, does not take that way of figurating, which would injure its Candor and Ingenuity. (u) *Luc. de* (u) *Luc. de*
cian, who is admirable every confer. *Hist.*
 where else, is not here so much as against those vain Ornaments of Eloquence, which are not convenient for *History*. If, says he, you lay on too many of them, you'll make it like *Hercules*, drest with his Mistress's Cloathes; which is the greatest of all Extravagancies. It is yet less capable, continues he, of those clear marks Poetry uses, to cause those motions in mens hearts, by moving the Passions. That *History* which is candid and sincere, and does not design to impose upon me, ought to leave my heart free, to judge the better of what it tells me. Eloquence, which by its Character, is an Art that imposes, may steal upon my Liberty, by striving to

persuade me against my will. But an *History* which fixes it self purely within the Limits of Instruction, cannot handsomely make use of Figures, no further than to take from the Discourse its natural coldness, and to render it less tedious. It is only by these means that *Herodotus*, *Thucydides* and *Xenophon*, keep up the Reader's mind: And *Salust*, *Livy* and *Mariana*, never use Figures to impose upon the Publick. *Tacitus* is not so scrupulous; he looks like a man who thinks of nothing but of dazzling your Eyes: The boldness of his Metaphors, and of his other Figures, make his Expressions troublesome and too high. (x) *Cæsar* is upon another Extream; It is a Discourse naked, without Figures, unprovided of all Attire. It is not but that a figur'd Expression, made on purpose, might please sometimes more than proper words, because it makes the Images livelier, and more agreeable to the mind, and gives strength and nobleness to the Discourse;

(x) *Cæsar* scriptis Commentariis qui nudi sunt, absque omni ornatu orationis. *Cic.* in *B. ut.*

course ; and there is a boldness of Style , provided it be wise and judicious , which is admitted in places that want Life. But for Figures, to be well applied, be sure they be modest and familiar, not taking the flights of Poetry , or high Eloquence ; Let them not be, says *Lucian* , too bright , nor too elaborate , unless in the Description of a Battel , or in a Speech , where an *Historian* may spread the Sails of his Eloquence, without soaring too high.

XVII.

The Passions also make one of *The Passions.* the great Ornaments of the Narration, when they are on purpose, and that they are touch't judiciously. The Truth is, that they do not require that heat which ought to accompany the Stage : one must give them another Air ; for they are not to be acted , but rehearsed. An *Historian* may make his Discourse passionate ,
but

but he ought not to be passionate himself. Therefore let him study men to the bottom, that he may lay open in his own mind the most private motions Passion is capable of raising there, that he may express its trouble and disorder; and that well applied, is very agreeable in a Narration. *Thucydides* has treated that part better than *Herodotus*; for he is more eloquent, and more pathetic, as (y) *Dionysius Halycarnassæus* says, thô. *Herodotus* has sometimes more life. *Hermogenes* propounds an admirable Model of a tender, affectionate, and passionate Narration in the Death of *Panthæa*, Queen of *Susiana*, which is written in the Seventh Book of *Xenophon's* *Cyræpædia*. It is one of the finest places in that Author: All is said in a touching Strain. *Photius* assures us, that *Josephus* has a great Art in his Discourse, to move the Soul by the Passi-

(y) *Dionys.*
Halicar. Epist.
ad Pompei. &
de Virt. Serm.

(z) *Affectus eos* ons. (z) *Quintillian* affirms, that
præcipue, qui dulciores sunt, nemo Historicorum Livio magis
commendavit. Fab. l. 10. c. 1.

Livy,

Livy, of all *Historians*, has most signaliz'd himself by those tender and delicate ways, whereby he has entertain'd the sweetest motions of the Soul: *Affectus eos precipue, qui dulciores sunt, nemo Historicorum Livio magis commendavit.* *Fabius*, l. 10. c. 1. The Rape of the *Sabins*, those tender motions they shew'd at that time to take the Arms out of the hands of the *Romans*, their *Husbands*, and of the *Sabins*, their *Fathers*; the Death of *Lucretia*; Her Body exposed to Publick View, to move the People to rebell against the *Tarquins*; *Veturia* at her Son *Cariolanus's* Feet, to appease his Fury, when he came to besiege *Rome*; *Virginia* stabb'd by her Father; the Consternation of *Rome*, after the Battel of *Cannæ*; and a thousand other such things, touch't in his *History* by the most tender Expressions imaginable, are fine Examples thereof. And it is in that *Historian* you ought to study the way of treating Passions as they ought

ought to be in *History*; for he animates himself only in the places where heat is requisite. *Tacitus* does not mind how to manage his heat; he is always passionate; and even those Colours he uses, are always too strong; and because he is still too full in some things, and that he does not Copy after Nature, he does not move so much. I say nothing of the other *Historians*, the greatest number of whom have not understood the Passions, nor the way they ought to be represented in. It is a particular kind of *Rhetorick*, which requires a great Sense, and a very exact knowledge of Morality. But, if we intend to please, let us beware of those Dry Narrations, which are void of the moving strokes which Nature

XVIII.

That Affectation which appears *The Descripti-*
in most *Historians*, in making De-^{ons.}
scriptions, has, in a manner, run
down its use amongst judicious
people. Nothing indeed is more
childish, than a Description too
much polish'd in a serious *Hi-*
story. Young Authors run head-
long into it, without distincti-
on: You cannot be too circum-
spect in the use thereof. The
Principle which is observable in
it, is, That you must use it no
more than is necessary to illu-
strate those things, the know-
ledge whereof is essential to what
you write. Such is the Descrip-
tion of the *Isle of Capræa*, lib. 4.
Annal. Tacit. For it denotes the
Reason *Tyberius* had to retire thi-
ther toward the latter end of his
life, which renders it necessary;
and being short, eloquent, and
polish'd, without any Superflui-
ty, one may say, that it is as it
ought

(a) *Sal.* in
Bello Jugurt.

ought to be. The Description
(a) *Salust* made of the place
where *Jugurtha* was defeated by
Metellus, serves to make one know
the Fight better. You may see
there the Vertue of the *Roman*,
as well as the Experience of the
Numidian King, by the advantage
he had taken in possessing him-
self of the Hills: and all the
recital of the Battel, is better un-
derstood, by that draught of the
place which the *Historian* lays be-
fore your Eyes, as well as the
Picture of that place; where
Hannibal fought, *Minucius*, Book
22. *Annal. Livii*, which is a place
well touch'd. Descriptions might
again be allow'd in a great *Hi-*
story, to make the Narration more
pleasing, provided they be fitted
well to the purpose, and free
from that superfluity which com-
monly accompanies them, when
given by young *Historians*. The
desire they have to shew their
Parts that way, makes them fall
in a pittiful childishness. Nay,
(b) *Lucian* finds fault with the

(b) *Luc. de*
Hist. confer.

too long Description which *Thucydides* makes of the Plague of *Athens*, in the Second Book of his History; and he is, perhaps, in the right: for that Author, tho' wise, runs into a Narration of that Disease too particular: But that Critick has more reason, when he complains of that impertinent *Historian* of his Time, who took so much delight in making great Descriptions of Mountains, of Cities, of Battels, which, he says, out-do in Coldness, all the Snows, and all the Ice of the *North*. And indeed, nothing is colder than a description which is too much studied. The Machines of War us'd by *Cæsar*, are describ'd in his Commentaries, with a way of Circumstances too great for so mecanick a matter as that is. That *Commander*, whose Reputation in the knowledge of War, is establish'd, seems to have a desire to be thought also a good *Engineer*; it looks too much affected for a man so judicious. The Description

tion

tion of *Africa*, in the War of *Jugurtha* in *Salust*, is too full of Circumstances. There was no need of so many to mark the Limits of the Kingdoms of *Atterbal* and *Jugurtha*, which were then in dispute: What need was there to describe all that Countrey, and to make a distinction of the Manners of the People, with so much particularity? Descriptions must then be useful, exact, short, elegant, never studied, having no harshness in them, nor a vain desire of making your Wit appear more than your Subject, that your Descriptions may look well, as those of *Livy* do: 'twere fit you should make him your Pattern.

XIX.

Speeches.

I find the Masters Opinions very much divided in that Point. *Herodotus*, *Thucydides*, and *Xenophon*, have signaliz'd themselves chiefly by their Speeches: *Thucydides*

dides did better than any of them; the Speeches of the chiefest Actors in his *History*, *Pericles*, *Nicias*, *Alcibiades*, *Archidamus*, and of all the Nations that speak by Deputies, are excellent Lessons for Speakers of all Ages; and *Demosthenes* formed himself chiefly in that School. *Polybius* uses more Formalities: he doth not let *Scipio* speak so much, tho he has reason to do it, having always been his Companion in War; (c) *Cæsar* is still more sparing; for he makes hardly any Speeches at all, pretending they are against the Truth of *History*, and taking rather the part of writing bare Memoires, that he may seem plainer in his Discourse. *Dionysius Halycarnassæus* causes *Brutus* to make a long Exhortation upon the Death of *Lucetia*, that so he might excite the People to Revenge; and that Oration which he makes *Valerius* to speak upon the fittest form of Government in a State, Book 7. of his *History*, is very tedious.

(c) In Sermōnibus effingendis *Herodotus*, *Thucydides*, *Xenophon*, *Salustius* nimii videntur: & causa est cur *Cæsar* Commentarios scripsit, ut id omitteret, in quo alii laborant. *Bis* ciol. l. 7. hor. subcell.

Josephus, Appian, Dio Cassius, and Procopius, are great Discourfers, as well as *Thucydides* and *Xenophon*, which took that Idea of speaking out of *Homer*: And in truth, if we examine the grounds of those Discourses, and, above all, of those that are made by Captains, to encourage the Soldiers to fight, we shall find but little likelihood in them. (d) *Trogus* reproaches *Salust* and *Livy*, with a great deal of reason, for the immoderate excess of Speeches in their *Histories*: And indeed all those Discourses they attribute to great men, have but a false look: for out of what *Memoires* could they have taken them? Besides, a Warrior don't speak like one that makes it his business to speak in publick. (e) So when *Pericles*, in *Thucydides*, made an Oration in praise of his Soldiers that had been defeated and kill'd by the *Bæotians*: His Speech is feigned, as well as that which *Cariline*, in *Salust*, makes to the *Conspirators*, which, in all probability,

(d) *Trogus* reprehendit in *Livio & Salustio*, quod Con-
ciones & Ora-
tiones operi
suo inferendo,
historiæ mo-
dum excessere-
runt. *Just.* l. 38.

(e) *Livius*,
Thucydides in-
terferunt Con-
ciones, quæ
nunquam ab iis,
quibus sunt at-
tributæ cog-
nitæ fuerunt.

Scal. Poet. l. i.

was

was secret, and not much studied. This is partly what (f) *Ben. 1. 2.* *de Hist.* says, to improve that mistake. *Thucydides*, who was judicious, took care of that in his last Books, where he makes fewer Speeches than in the first. But it is a Natural Lesson; for we never write an *History*, but we bring in those that have a share in it, to make them speak; because nothing gives more vigour to a Narration, which is apt to grow cold by a Discourse too much polished. There is then a *medium* to be taken: A small Discourse made on purpose in an *History*, by one that bears a Character fit to make it, being also well suited to the Person and Subject under hand, may please, being put in its due place. But those formal Speeches at the Head of an Army ready to engage, and those Deliberations of a tedious prolixity, which are made upon those businesses that are spoken of, are almost out of fashion in good *Histories*: And the

wisest chuse to make their *Heroe* speak things in few words, without engaging themselves to say set Speeches; as *Livy*, in the beginning of his *History*, has done by the Embassadors which *Romulus* sent to his Neighbours. The most part of *Salust's* Speeches are very fine, but never to the purpose; for nothing is finer than *Marius's* Speech: It is the best Moral Lecture in the World upon Nobility; all is reasonable in it; and Antiquity has few of that Strength, to persuade People to embrace Vertue; but it is set in a wrong place; and the way that he makes *Cato* and *Cæsar* give their Opinion in the *Senate*, how great soever it be, is not made proportionable to the rest of his *History*. Of that number is the long Discourse *Dio* makes in the 56th Book of his *History*, in praise of Marriage, and of a Batchelor's Life. But on the contrary, there is nothing firmer than *Tyberius's* Speech upon the Reformation of *Luxury*, *Tacit. l. 3. Annal.* No Historian

storian ever made a Prince speak with more Dignity. The Speeches of Agrippa and of Mæcenas to Augustus, wherein the one advises him to quit the Empire, and the other to keep it, are extream fine in Dio Cassius; but they are so long, that they take up all the 52d Book. In fine, to finish this Article, I am for (g) Cicero's Advice, who speaking of the Discourses of Thucidides, says wisely, *I find them very fine, and I could not do so well if I would, nor would I do it if I could; which is all that can be well said upon that Subject; For, in fine, Speakers are always subject to be tedious: And Boccalinus is very pleasant, who condemns an Old Man to the Penance of reading one of Guichardin's Speeches, because he had read a Madrigall, with his Spectacles, upon Mount Parnassus.*

(g) De Thucydide Orationes quas interposuit laudare soleo: sed imitari neque possim si velim, neque velim si possim. Cic. de clar. Orat.

X X.

*The Characters
of Persons.*

(b) Explicen-
tur hominum
ipsorum non
solum res ge-
stæ, sed viræ ac
natura. Cic.
l. 2. de Orat.

(i) Libr. 21.
Annal.

Pictures are a great Embel-
lishment in *History*, when well
drawn; but *Romances* have spoil'd
that way; for we make too ma-
ny, and those such as do not well
resemble: We lose time in de-
scribing, after our own Fancy,
the Air of the Person: but this
is not the thing (b): For what
does it signifie to me to know
whether *Hannibal* had good Teeth,
provided that his *Historian* shew
me the greatness of his Genius;
that he shew me a bold and an
active Spirit, vast Thoughts, a
stout Heart, and all that anima-
ted by an extream Ambition,
and supported too by a strong
Constitution, as (i) *Livy* has de-
scrib'd it? So *Salust* gives me a
great Opinion of *Catiline*, by the
Picture he makes of him at the
beginning of his *History*: And
when I see that desperate Soldier
raise Armies in his Closet, go up
to

to the *Senate* with a Silence that shews his Resolution to affront the Consul; to hear, unconcern'd, his *Invectives*; to put *Rome* in Allarm, to make *Italy* tremble; to dare at last what no Particular ever durst; I am not surpriz'd, after the Description the *Historian* has made me of him: I see a Man of Resolution, who stirs all things, without being seen, because he had taken well his measure. *Pompey* is far off with the best Troops of the *Commonwealth*; tied by a troublesome, tho' necessary War; *Rome* full of Factious People, the Provinces full of Malecontents: there's a general Disorder in the *Commonwealth*, through a Deluge of Vice which overwhelm'd it; and every thing favours *Catiline's* Design, in the Conjunction he found of putting it in execution. So one may guess what might happen of the War of *Atherbal* and *Jugurtha*, after *Salust's* Description of the Genius's of both; that I know to the bottom *Sylla* and

Marius, according to the Idea he has given me of them, and that I take pleasure to see, issuing from their Spring which that *Historian* has discover'd unto me, the Sequel of *Jugurtha's* great Actions, who gave so great disturbance to the *Romans*, after the Image he has drawn of that Captain. It is in that manner that the Ancients have mix'd in their *Histories* those kind of Pictures of the Persons they design'd to represent, to distinguish them from others; which is of great Ornament in a Piece, when done opportunely: For after a Character is well establish'd by those Essential Features, which make a distinction of it, all goes on a great deal better; all things are better understood in the Narration: But it is a Master-piece, to hit that Resemblance, which consists only in singular and imperceptible Features, which alone expresses Nature, and which one hardly meets with, unless he searches the hearts, and unwraps all their folds,

folds, that he may well know what is hidden, But what strength of Spirit, and what acuteness is requisite for that purpose? These things that follow are to be observ'd in it: First, the Picture ought to be real; and this was *Xenophon's* miscarriage in the Picture he made of *Cyrus*, wherein he gave nothing but the Idea of an *Heroe*. Secondly, it ought to resemble: in that *Tacitus* has not been exact enough, minding to follow rather his Genius, than to imitate Nature; seeking more to make a good Picture, than to give the resemblance, provided that his Pictures please; as that of *Sejanus*, lib. 4. *Annal*. He cares but little whether they resemble or not; for he makes him a great deal worse than he is, if we may believe *Paterculus*, who praises him much. Thirdly, an Author ought to make only the Pictures of Persons of Consequence: There *Salust* mistook in the Representation of *Sempronia*, who makes but an indifferent Figure

gure in *Catiline's* Conspiracy. But altho too much time ought not to be spent in painting the External Parts of the Person, yet he may do it in some cases, when that may serve to make the Genius of those you speak of better understood. And indeed there are

(k) *Lucretiam*
nocte sera non
in convivio
luxuque sed
deditam lanæ
inter Ancillas
sedentem in-
veniunt, l. 1.
Annal.

several ways of painting: (k) *Li-zy*, speaking of *Lucretia*, so fair to her Husband's Eyes, without mentioning any thing of her Face, paints only her Virtue, and gives in one word, the greatest Idea that can be given of an honest Woman. *Tacitus* paints *Tyberius* only by his Actions; that way he makes him to be known:

(l) *Oppressit in*
Tricliniis Pa-
rasytos suos
violis & flori-
bus, sicut ani-
mam aliqui
efflaverint,
Lampr. in He-
liog.

(l) *Lampridius* makes a right Picture of the Emperour *Heliogabalus*, saying, that he stifi'd his *Parasites* in heaps of Flowers, after he had drown'd them with Wine: *Procopius* paints the Empress *Theodora* by her Gallantries: A drinking bout is sufficient to the *Historian* that writes *Venceslaus's* Life, to draw the Picture of that Emperour; who caus'd, says he, his

his Cook to be put upon the Spit, and roasted, because he had ill roasted a Pig which that Prince had a mind to eat. But the best way of painting, is to discover the secret motions of the heart, which makes the Person better known. It is from thence only that you ought to take those Features which make a distinction, that you may give a Character rais'd from its own ground. All the rest ought to be little accounted of in a serious *History*, which can endure nothing but what is judicious. I should not like also those Pictures which are copied, and taken here and there, as in *Mariana*; those he took out of *Tacitus*: Nor like that of *Walsstein*, in (m) *Sarrafin*, (m) A French Author, who wrote part of *Walsstein's Conspiracy*, which is made up, for the most part, of the finest Pictures in Antiquity. You ought not to lose time in Copies, when you draw after the Life, and when you think of making an Original. After all is done, *History* is the faithfullest Picture of those you speak

speak of; nothing shewing their Character better than the continuation of their Actions.

XXI.

*The Reflections
and Sentences.*

There is much to be said upon that Article, which makes all the delight of *History*, when delicately done: but there are many mistakes to be avoided in this Point, where you can never use too much Simplicity. *Xenophon*, *Polybius*, and *Tacitus*, are full of Reflections; *Thucydides*, *Salust*, and *Cæsar*, are more reserv'd. What Party must an Author chuse amongst so great Examples of so different a Conduct, and in so important a matter. And, in truth, the Beauty which *History* hopes for from that kind of Ornament, requires to be manag'd with exact judgment: For, in fine, a man quits the Character of an *Historian*, who ought to tell naturally, what he has to say, without mingling, *mal à propos*.

pos, his own Conceits with it, when he moralizes upon all sorts of things, turning, without distinction, the Adventures which offer themselves, great and small, into curious and Political Reflections. Nothing also is more capable of adulterating Truth, or, at least, of perplexing it, than those fine thoughts, which some Authors shuffle in out of their own brains, and which a Reader often has not Wit enough to distinguish from the ground of *History*. It is then Wisdom in an Author to have no frivolous Fancies of his own; to play the Philosopher's part indifferently upon every thing that presents it self before him; as *Ammianus Marcellinus*, who acts too much like a Philosopher, by an Affectation of appearing Learned, which is but little understood. *Livy* goes on his way, stopping at nothing; he says what he knows of the things he speaks of, and leaves the Reader at liberty to make Reflections, without preventing him

(n) Deos esse
non negligere
humana, su-
perbiæ & cru-
delitati, & si se-
ras, non leves
pœnas venire,
l. 3. *Annal.*

him with his own: and when he does it, it is only with few words, but Noble and Great; (n) as what he says of the Crime and Punishment of *Appius*, who had stolen away *Virginia*. It is a great Gift in an Author, to know how to furnish his Readers with Matters to apply their Minds to, to draw Consequences, and to give what Air he pleases to the things related. All Readers will have their liberty to think what they please upon what is presented to them, without being pre-engag'd; and the use of that liberty is one of the greatest delights he takes in reading. Let us then retrench those deep and abstracted Reflections, if we mean to please; not labouring after much Spruceness in what we write: Let us be more natural and candid; Let us say the Truth, without commenting upon it, if our Wit be strong enough to bear it; Let us, above all things, forbear to moralize upon Fortune, and her Unconstancies,

stancies, a thing so common in Books; Let us not affect those Sententious Expressions, which have too much Gayity and Ornament; Let us renounce those Witticisms, and false Sentiments, which Authors of a small Genius jingle with. If we mix in our Discourse some Reflections, let them be as natural as may be, and such as arise from the Subject it self; let them never be too fine, nor too elaborate; let them be more solid, tho less ornamental; let them look more like the Arguments of a wise *Politician*, than the Affectation of an Orator; (o) Let him be neither too frequent, nor too loose, but woven, as one may say, in the Body of your Work: In fine, let them never have that lofty look of Reflections, which give an ill Opinion of him that makes them. It is in that that *Tacitus*, *Machiavel*, *Paulus Jovius*, *Davila*, and most part of the *Italians* and *Spaniards*, are excessive. But let none adventure to make those

(o) Curandum
ne sententiae
mineant extra
corpus oratio-
nis expressae,
Petr.

those curious Reflections of *Policy* and *Morality*, unless he knows the Man entirely, the Illusions of his Spirit, and the Weakness of his Mind. It is only by that knowledge that good *Historians* are distinguish'd from those of a middle Rank, as *Plutarch* in his *Lives*. *Salust*, tho' unaffected, preaches too much against the Corruptions and Ill Manners of his own Time; he is always angry with his Countrey, and always dissatisfied with the Government: he gives too bad an Opinion of the *Commonwealth*, through his *Invectives*, and his Reflections upon the *Luxury of Rome*. In truth, tho' there is nothing false in what he says, yet he runs out of his first thoughts. So *Davila* would make fewer Speeches, did he but remember that he is an *Historian*. It is necessary to understand *Morality* well, to make just Reflections; For true *Morality* is the ground of good *Policy*. Therefore *Tacitus's Policy* is often false, because his *Morality* is
not

not true : either he makes Men appear too much corrupted, or he is not candid enough himself : There is nothing natural commonly in his Reflections, because nothing is innocent in them ; he envenoms, and gives an ill turn to every thing : He has by that means spoil'd many People, who imitate him in that Article, not being able to do it in any other. And this must be observ'd upon the use of Reflections in *History*. A Sentence may be put in the Mouth of a Character fit to speak Sentences : *Mariana*, as well as *Strada* ; do not seem to manage that well. People also have no great affection for those stiff men which never yield to any thing, and who, to make what they say seem more important, multiply Sentences upon Sentences, Reflections upon Reflections, and by a ridiculous Gravity, will seem *Cato's* in small trifles. The too great subtilty in those refinings of Conjecture, is apt to degene-

H

tate

rate in a false delicacy; and Reflections are good only when they least appear to be so.

XXII.

Digressions.

Digressions have also their agreeableness, when they are made in fit times, and that they have nothing too wide, nor too loose, because it gives to a Narration a Variety so necessary to make it agreeable; but they ought to be wisely mixed. An Author is apt to err when he goes from his Subject; for one whose head is not strong enough changes easily; and to quit your matter without precaution, to seek Adventures, and carry your Reader abroad, does not belong so much to an *Historian*, as to a Writer of Adventures, who sticks upon every thing he finds to stuff up his Relation. He takes Cities, he fights Battels, he finds Adventures every where; as *Hercules*, who continually goes from his

his Text, by his too frequent, and often forc'd Digressions; tho' he took Example by *Homer*, who is indeed a great Master; for tho' he soars often; he goes nevertheless strait enough to his Mark, without losing time in things out of season. *Thucydides* has a better Order than *Herodotus*; he confines himself strictly to his Subject: The Conspiracy of *Harmodius* and *Aristogylon*, in the Sixth Book, is one of those Narrations wherein he has excell'd most. *Xenophon* endeavours to imitate him: If he forgets himself sometimes, as he has done, lib. 5. of the *History of Cyrus*, in the Adventure concerning *Panthea*, yet that Adventure has a natural Relation to the Body of his History; *Panthea* having been taken by *Cyrus*, in the Overthrow of the *Assyrians*, and *Abradatus*, her Husband, by that means coming to *Cyrus's* side, and becoming one of the chiefest of his Army. The plain Truth is, I would not be responsible for
H 2 the

(p) *Polybius* &
Salustius ita
 peccarunt, ut
 nullam un-
 quam veniam
 impetrarint
 dum digredi-
 untur, &c. Ex
Sebast. Macr.

the other Digressions of that Au-
 thor, which are not quite so well
 coupled to his Subject in his o-
 ther Works. (p) *Polybius* has fre-
 quent Digressions upon Policy,
 knowledge of Arms, and upon
 the Laws of *History*, which do
 not appear very necessary: *Sal-*
ust sometimes commits the same
 Fault, wherein a Modern Cri-
 tick blames them both. *Photius*
 praises much the Digression of
Dionysius Halycarnassæus, lib. 7. to
 describe the Consequence of *A-*
ristodemus's Tyranny. The Que-
 stion about the Phoenix, lib. 6.
Annal. Tacit. upon the news which
 came to *Rome*, of a Phoenix which
 had appear'd in *Egypt*, under the
 Reign of *Tyberius*, is according to
 the Rules of a just Digression:
 The Question is examin'd by
 the several Opinions of the Na-
 turalists upon that Bird; his Qua-
 lities, his Shape, all is describ'd
 there in few words. A Digressi-
 on of that kind set in a due
 place, is of great Ornament to a
 Narration, and that helps to
 spur

spur the Curiosity of a Reader, and to rouse his Spirits. Nothing also in *Mariana's History* contributes so much to that Air of greatness which it has, as the Art which he has of bringing into it, by way of Digression, all that has happen'd considerable in the World, of admirable inefabulous Ages, of remarkables in Greece, in Sicily, in the Roman Empire; a pretty particular Account of the *Commonwealth* of *Carthage*, which is no where else better than it is there; the Sieges of *Saguntus* and *Numancia*, the Passage of *Hannibal* into *Italy*, the Series of Emperours, the Birth of *Christianity*, the Preaching of the Gospel, the Conquests of the *Arabians*, and many other things which look great. He has a Genius which is altogether for great matters, which hangs always some way or other to the *Spanish History*. No *Historian* ever honour'd his Countrey so much by any Work; for he has given his Countrey the Honour of e-

very great thing that was ever done in the World. But as there are but few Spirits strong enough to follow the Stream of an *History*, without taking breath, and tying themselves up to their Subject, without going out of it ; so there are few *Historians* but will sometimes forget themselves, by doing the contrary in their Digressions. I will not take the pains to mark them ; they every where occur ; nothing being scarcer than that exact sense, which knows how to apply it self to its Subject : I shall only say , that

(q) *Livy* has shunn'd nothing with more care than those by-ways which led him from his matter, as himself declares it, nothing being less judicious. But in our *Historians*, the same ridiculous humour may still be found, which

(r) *Lucian* met with in his time, in them that wrote the *Parthian War*, who mix'd in their Narrations the foolishhest things in the World, to render them more diverting, running from Countrey

to

(q) Nihil minus quæsitum à principio hujus operis, quam ut plus justo ab rerum ordine declinarem varietatibusque distinguendo opera, legentibus veluti diverticula quærerem, l. 9.
Annal.

(r) *Luc. de Conser. Hist.*

to Countrey, from Age to Age,
 from one Adventure to another,
 without any distinction. You
 must then lay it down as a cer-
 tain and indispensible Rule, That
 Digressions ought to be connect-
 ed always, by somewhat or other,
 to the Principal Subject in hand,
 as (s) that Judicious *Historian* we
 spoke of just now has always done;
 And you ought to examine well,
 whether in the bottom they have
 no natural antipathy; for if they
 have, they are not fit to be us'd;
 for nothing is more essential to the
 Digression, than the Affinity it
 ought to have with the Subject:
 The great Secret is, to know ex-
 actly how far it ought to go;
 for it has its Natural Limits,
 which are not to be pass'd. That
 which renders the Proportion dif-
 ficult, is, that the Extent of them
 ought not always to be the same;
 for it must be great or small,
 more or less, according to the
 Relation it has to the chief part
 of *History*; and the making a
 right Judgment here, is the

(s) Statuit non
 attingere ex-
 terna, nisi qua
 Romanis co-
 hærent rebus,
 Luc. l. 39. An-
 nal.

Rock upon which all *Historians* dash; for there are few which in their Digressions exceed not due bounds, it being the greatest difficulty to keep them exactly, and to rule themselves. In that there is a great deal to be said against *Mariana*, who in the beginning of his *History* has taken many ways to arrive at his Point: He has need of an *Apology* upon that, which I do not pretend to justify him in. The only Model a Writer may propose to himself in this, is (t) *Livy*, who would not have left the *Roman History* to tell his Mind upon the Success of *Alexander's Arms*, had he come into *Italy*, without great precautions, and satisfying the Reader's mind with ample Excuses: The Discourse he makes upon it is very curious, and not at all out of season.

(t) Ut quærere libeat qui eventus Romanis Rebus, si cum *Alexandro* foret bellatum, futurus fuerit, *Annal. l. 9.*

XXIII.

History ought to be Eloquent, *Eloquence fits in History,* and not tedious: In that only its Art consists; that is its common Effect. But there is an extraordinary Effect, known but by few people, to say nothing, tho' true, but what has the Air of Truth, to gain Credit in the most difficult things to be believed. Eloquence, which knows how to give to things the Air which may render them acceptable, ought to be employ'd about it. And the setting of things in that admirable Order, which makes them probable, is its chiefest work; The Matter is given to the *Historian* in *Memoires*, which People furnish him with; but it is his business to lay them together, and to do it well: He must not think so much what he says, as to the manner of saying it; for in this, as in all other parts of Eloquence, the Method is

(u) *Thucydides*
omnes dicendi
artificio vincit,
Cic. l. 2. de Orat.
(w) *Tito Li-*
vio miræ fa-
cundia viro,
Fab. l. 8. c. 1.

is all ; That is properly the use the *Historian* ought to make of Eloquence, which alone sets every thing in its place. It is the great Artifice of *Thucydides*, says (u) *Cicero*, which has surpass'd all the other *Historians* by his Eloquence. (w) *Quintillian* speaks of that of *Livy* with admiration. It is only by that admirable Quality that those Two Great Men have distinguish'd themselves so much from the Commonalty of other *Historians* ; for it is Eloquence which gives a man the way of explaining himself. He persuades best, who explains himself in the easiest manner ; it is persuasion only which gives to things that colour of Truth, which they have by no other way but by that turn which is given them, and by the light they are set in. So nothing is more eloquent than the Picture *Salust* makes of the Condition which *Rome* was in, when *Catiline* took up the Design of making himself Master of it : And when that admirable

Author represents the *Commonwealth* corrupted through *Luxury* and *Avarice*, weakned under the weight of its own greatness; they are the finest Expressions which can be found in *History*: It is in those Images your Art must shew it self, if you have any; and the *Historians* of the first Rate are full of them. It is that Eloquence which ought to be mix'd with *History*, to animate it with its flame and Spirit; for without it all is but languishing: and those several turns one ought to embellish a Narration with, to make it agreeable; all the Art of Transitions, those so tender and passionate motions which go to the heart, that Connexion of the most Memorable Actions; that ordering of Circumstances, and those Embellishments which raise the Admiration, are nothing but the Effects of that singular Eloquence which is proper to *History*, which ought sometimes to raise it self, and soar aloft, when

occasion requires it. But it is the Effect of an *Historian's* Judgment, to distinguish those places. A kind of Eloquence did rule over the *Greeks* and the *Romans* too, in the Speeches of those which were to speak, which was only meer Ostentation, shewing the Wit of the *Historian*, rather than the Truth of *History*; and in that the Authors thought rather to amuse the people, than to instruct them. That Eloquence is out of fashion among the wise Moderns, because it had an affected way; and those who have any Judgment, love only what is natural. The Prefaces of (x) *Salust*, which are great Discourses, full of Sense, and very Eloquent, seem to me of that kind; They are common places, without any reference to his *History*. That Author, perhaps, had some Reserve, which he made use of in times of need; as (y) *Tully* did, according to his own Confession. I have always, says he, a Volume of Prefaces ready against I have

(x) *Salustius* in *Bello Jugurthino* & *Catilinario* nihil ad *Historiam* pertinentibus principiis usus est, *Fab. l. 10. c. 8.*

(y) *Habeo* Volumen proemiorum, ex eo ligere soleo cum aliquod $\sigma\upsilon\lambda\lambda\epsilon\gamma\epsilon\mu\epsilon\alpha$ institui, ad *Atticum* l. 16. ep. 6.

have need of 'em. I would not have suspected him of so much precaution, had not he himself bragg'd of it. That may be good for an Orator that speaks always publickly, and has not always leisure to prepare himself; but it is not to be endur'd in *History*, where the Author is Master both of himself and his Time: For, to conclude, all those Discourses, tho' never so fine of themselves, cease to be so, as soon as they are out of their places, and as soon as any Affectation appears: And this is what may be said upon the Eloquence of *History*.

XXIV.

There may also be other Ornaments fit to be put in *History*, to make it more pleasant, either when it is dull, and when it is too plain, by over-long Narrations, which are too much like one another: but, of those Ornaments,

The other Ornaments which one may apply in History.

naments, the most apparent are not always the most essential: *All is not Gold that glitters.* A Mind that is bridled up does not take delight in too much finery; and that ought to engage a Learned Man to manage those Ornaments without Prodigality, and accommodate himself to mens Capacity, which too great a brightness dazles; besides that those Ornaments crowded one upon another, surprise more than they please. There are hidden ones, which give greater satisfaction to curious people; and tho they escape others notice, they do not escape theirs; you may every moment discover new Charms which uphold them, and which are lasting, more than those which give but a glaunce, and die. Those kind of Ornaments consist sometimes of eloquent or witty turns, which in a manner are surprising, and cast an unlook'd for Effect on the places they are put in; whereof here
are

are some Examples: *Porfenna*, King of *Clusium*, besieges *Rome*: *C. Mutius*, mov'd with the danger he sees his Countrey in by so close a Siege, goes into *Porfenna's* Camp, kills his Secretary close by him, thinking to have kill'd him: The Murtherer is seisd; they order a Pan of fire to be brought, to force him to declare his Associates by the Torment of the fire. That Young Man, full of Courage, in cold Blood, puts his hand in the fire, and without any alteration in his Countenance, let it be quite burnt upon the hot Embers; speaking in this manner to the King: (2) See how those that are possess'd with true Glory, despise their own Carcass. That spoken with a firm Countenance, alters the face of things; the Murtherer, thô abominable and odious, casts an admiration on the Spirits of them that were present; they look upon him with Respect, and they send him home with Praises, in the same moment that they were pre-

(2) Sentias
quam vile cor-
pus sit iis, qui
magnam glori-
am vident. *Tit.*
Liv. l. 2. Annal.

preparing to make him end his Life in cruel Tortures. A resolute word only makes that change ; and such a word well plac'd , is a great Ornament in a Narration, and has a marvellous Effect. So upon *Fabius's* retaking *Tarentum* , *Hannibal* , thô vanquish'd , spoke this fine Saying, which look'd as thô he had still been victorious, praising himself , to raise his Enemy the more : * *The Romans* , said he , have also at last their *Hannibal*. That was a proud way of submitting himself. Those sayings are frequent in that *Historian*. Nothing also gives more the Idea of those who speak so , when they speak well , nor of him that makes them speak, as when he does it on purpose. Here is one of another kind , taken out of *Tacitus* , in that famous Feast *Massalina* made to her Lover : In the heat of the rejoicing, and of the Debauchery of that Feast, they got an Idiot, whose Name was *Valens* , to climb up to the

* Et Romani
suum habent
Annibalem,
l. 27. Annal.

top

top of a Tree; and they asked him what he saw: *A Tempest*, said he, *which gathers in the Air, and comes from Ostium.* That word, spoken by a Fool, cast a coldness and sorrow upon the People's Spirits, which disturb'd all things, tho' spoken without design; for it was a Prognostication of the *Emperour's* return, which happen'd a few days after, and caus'd the *Empress* to be stabb'd, tir'd with her infamous Life. Those marvellous sayings are very acceptable in *History*, being fit to rouse up the Reader's Mind by something which is sharp. There are Thousands of others which an *Historian* employs to embellish his Work, and which have escap'd my Memory: and I do not pretend to say all that is good in this kind. It is enough to mark those which can give another face to Affairs; to search other Conjectures, to give way to other Ideas, and to other Sentiments: In a word, all those fine sayings, capable of causing some kind of

révolution in the Reader's Mind, to give him Action, and Motion too, being always truly fine, are never out of use. The business is to place them so, that they may appear incorporated in a Narration, to play all their part in it; that is to say, to make the matter pleasant, when, of itself, it is barren and disagreeable.

XXV.

*The Sentiments
which ought to
be allow'd in
History.*

There are Sentiments which are fit for the Theatre, and are not so for *History*, because Poetry says things as they should be; *History* says them as they are. So those *Historians*, which give their *Heroes* such exquisite Sentiments, are not always the most judicious; and whatever is not grounded upon good sense, be it never so fine, is not the best. So that *Quintus Curtius* is not always in the right, to represent *Alexander* so admirable. He does not
make

make him act by the measure of Prudence, but always puts him upon difficult and perillous Adventures: Danger charms him; He is not fond of Conquests, but of the Glory of Conquering: He might surprise *Darius*, by falling upon him in the Night-time, and that way hide his Weakness, the Enemies Army being twice in number bigger than his own: But that Great Man, who cares less to overcome, than to make People admire his Bravery, attacks the King of *Persia* in the middle of the Day; resolved rather to lose his Life gloriously, than to overcome by surprisal. *Darius*, after his Overthrow, proffers to divide *Asia* with him, and offers him his Daughter in Marriage; *Alexander* chuses rather to pursue his Honour through Perils, than to become Master with so much Tranquility: He does not hearken to those Proposals; he will accept of nothing but what is extraordinary. His *Historian* does

him a great deal of Honour: sure, a little likelihood would have done well mixt with so much Glory: Does not he make his *Heroe* more Fool-hardy than wise, and more adventurous than ambitious? Without doubt he found that way finer; but withall, he has given us reason to doubt, whether it is a *Romance*, or an *History*, which he has left us; for he pushes things too far. So important it is for an Author in all things to make Reason his Standard, and to follow rather the Nature of things, than the fine Imaginations of his own Wit. Let not *History* then authorize the ridiculous Conceits of false Glory, which causes vain People to commit so many Errors, the most part of which contributes little to true Honour, because they have no sense of it. Let it not attribute to a *Mountebank* the Sentiments of a solid man, nor the Vertues of a *Romantick Heroe* to a true Knight. Great men are subject to form

to themselves Idea's of Glory, after their own fancy, and according to the failing of their Vanity. But the Publick Interest ought to be dearer to him who governs, than his own Glory: And the true Honour of a great Prince, is to gain the People's Hearts rather than their Fears. Those are the Sentiments which ought to reign most in *History*, that it may become a Lesson of Clemency to Princes; and a Pattern of Reason and good Sense to all People. Let not an *Historian* therefore be mistaken; let him first distinguish true Honour from false, and in the Maxims of this Life praise only what is good; Let him clear the Peoples Errors, without becoming himself a Slave to Popular Sentiments: Let him never suffer himself to judge of things by their Events, without running up to their Spring; but let him open their very Principles: Let him be careful of doing Justice to the true and pretended Merit, that

he may not impose on Posterity, which gives Credit to what is said, without any examination, and sticks to the Litteral Sense: Let him never shew great Events, without giving notice of Causes, and without discovering their true Motives. Sometimes it is nothing, or at least, but little; but People lack to see great things come from small Principles, as *Dionysius Halicarnassæus* teaches in the Fifth Book of his *History*, on the occasion of the Revolution of Government from the Kings of *Rome*, which happen'd through the Insolence of Young * *Tarquin*, and the Pride of his Father. That is the Spirit which ought to reign in *History*, and the Maxim which must be observ'd therein. Let us see its Genius.

* *T. Liv. l. i.*
Ann.

XXVI.

Nothing can be writ considerable in *History*, without a Genius; that makes all in that Art, as well as in others; and it is only that way that *Historians* distinguish themselves from one another. A small Genius will make but little of a great Subject; and he that has a great Genius, will make a small Subject appear great. * To write *History* well therefore, a man must have an universal Genius, capable of great Idea's, to form to himself a great Model, and great Designs. *History* is a thing of importance †, says *Cicero*, and the business of a Man above the Common Level. And when *Lucian*, who was one of the finest Wits of his Age, which produc'd so many great men, confesses, that his Genius was too weak for *History*, and to attain to that Perfection which it requires. He frights me, by cre-

*How the Genius
of an Historian
must be.*

* Arduum videtur res gestas scribere, quod facta dictis exæquanda sunt, *Salust. proem. Bell. Catil.*

† Magnum quid Historiam recte scribere, & summis Oratoris proprium, *Cic. l. 2. de Orat.*

ating in me a just apprehension of the difficulty which attends it: For if that Author, which has written nothing but what is admirable, and gives Rules so full of good sense for the writing of *History*, acknowledges that he is not capable of sustaining the weight of so great a work, what will become of those that in one day set up for *Historians*, without any knowledge of what is Essential in *History*, as he says it happen'd in that War in *Armenia*, which produc'd so many Authors, through an Itch of writing, which at that time was a common Disease? But the Times are chang'd, says he; nothing is more difficult than for a man to compile a Work which all future Ages may esteem, as *Thucydides* has done. For what strength of Spirit is requisite to speak the Truth, without making Paraphrases, as those do, who have not Souls great enough to be clear and candid, and to speak things as they are? What
firm-

firmness to unmask Vice, naturally disguis'd with Dissimulation? What Sagacity to discover the bottom of the Genius of them we speak of, without sticking to the exterior part of the Person, which seldom signifies any thing? But when the business is to distinguish People and Times by what is essential in their Characters, how necessary is a clear and distinguishing head? As for Example, in relating the Civil Wars of *Rome*, not to confound the Spirit of the *Commonwealth* with that of *Monarchy*; the absoluteness of the one with the Dependency of the other; not to write the Reign of *Lewis* the Fourteenth, which is no way addicted to Superstition, like that of *Lewis* the Eleventh, whose Character was Superstition it self; not to represent *Charles the Great*, like *Henry* the Third, but to mark the Times and the Persons by the difference there is between them. What integrity, exactly to do Justice to Vice and
Virtue,

Virtue, to distinguish the true from the pretended Merit, and to use ones self to weigh the Actions, without any regard to the Persons? What Judgment, to take always the right side, to turn things to the right sense, to chuse always what is most solid; to interpose your Judgement upon the matter in agitation, without forcing the Reader, by any prejudices, to touch tender Points with that niceness of Wit which can only be the Effect of an exquisite sense; not to load your Discourse with too much Matter, which might chance to spoil the Spirit of it, without giving way to any Reflection whatsoever, made either by you, or any other Reader; to know how to find the true knot in every business, without mistaking your self in its explanation; not to deliver great Actions upon frivolous Motives; not to hide false Thoughts under a florid Expression; to avoid any thing which seems studied and forc'd, and to follow

follow in all things that beam of light and understanding which gives an Idea of the discerning Faculty of the *Historian*, by giving a good Opinion of his Capacities. So that the most necessary part in *History* is Judgment. An *Orator* may forget himself in the flights of his Eloquence, and venture bold strokes, which may pass upon a multitude of People, who are pleas'd with nothing more than boldness. A *Poet* may ramble from his *Text*, and has no great necessity to be always wise. The *Historian*, who speaks only in cold Blood, ought always to be Master of himself, and to say nothing but what is just nothing, in fine, requires so much Sense, so much Reason, so much Wit and Judgment, and so many other Qualities, to attain to perfection, as *History*; and after all is done, an happy Understanding, endued with all those Perfections, is not sufficient, without a great knowledge of the World. It was only the Con-
versation

versation *Polybius* had with *Scipio* and *Lelius*, that made him so able an *Historian*. We have in *Thucydides* and *Livy* accomplish'd Patterns of that Genius requir'd in *History*. Antiquity has nothing more finish'd in that kind. There is hardly any thing wanting in the one, or in the other, but that *Thucydides* is yet more sincere than *Livy*, and the last more natural than the first. *Tacitus* is admirable in his way; *Lipsius* prefers him before all others: Every body is not of his Opinion. One may say in general, That he is an *Historian* of a particular Rank, who has a great deal of agreeableness amongst great failings; but his defects are somewhat hidden under a greatness of Genius which shines in all he says, and under a loftiness not well to be describ'd, which raise him above many Authors more exact, and more natural than himself. He has his Party and his Admirers. It is true, that he pleases men of Fancy and Imagination,

gination, but not those that have most Judgment, nor those that love good Sense rather than Flourishes. Among Moderns, I find *Mariana*, *Davila*, *Fra Paolo*, have an admirable Genius for *History*. *Mariana* has the gift of thinking, and of saying nobly what he thinks and speaks, and of giving a Character of greatness to what runs in his Mind. *Davila* brings good Circumstances of things, discourses justly enough upon the Subjects he treats of, and carries on his Discourse in a continued Strain, which gives him that obliging Air which he has above others. *Fra Paolo*, in his *History* of the *Council* of *Trent*, gives what Colours he pleases to what he says: No body ever had that Art in a more eminent degree. He shews also a great Capacity, in searching to the bottom the Matters of Learning which he has in hand, to give his Readers a perfect knowledge thereof: No body ever writ with more Skill, nor with
more

more Wit, and never with less Justice and Truth. He is a passionate man, who employ'd all his Art in hiding his Passion: He made a jest in every thing, that he might not be thought to be angry; but he falls into another Defect: He railleth too much, in a Subject so serious as his is; for his Passion is seen in every thing he speaks. So that *Historian*, with his great Genius, has the most Vicious Character that can be in the way of writing *History*, where nothing is less pardonable than Enmity. An *Historian* is no longer believ'd, when once he is thought too passionate; which gives occasion of examining the Honesty which is necessary for him that pretends to write.

XXVII.

As every one ought to lay *The Historians*
down to himself a Rule of Mo- *Morality.*
rality, according to his Genius,
the *Historian's* Mind is known
by his Principles. You must
first of all take it for granted,
that there are but few who have
hearts noble enough, neither to
fear nor hope for any thing;
and who will value Truth a-
bove Interest, which is the most
general Spring of all the wrong
Judgments men make in things
they speak of. This is what you
ought to think upon first, when
you take upon you to instruct the
Publick; and it is the chiefest
Maxim an *Historian* ought to pro-
pose to himself. That being well
establish'd, he ought to think on-
ly to get Credit in People's good
Opinion, and to give a Colour
of Truth to all he says. It is
that chiefly to which all his en-
deavours ought to tend; which
he

he will never effect, but by establishing his Reputation: And it is not by Protestations of being sincere, that he shall demonstrate his Integrity: It is by making appear in all his words, the uprightness of his heart, and the honesty of his mind. Therefore nothing ought to come from him but what has the stamp of Equity and Reason. The Love he ought to have for Truth, ought to be the Rules of all his Expressions, and of all his Idea's. * Let him always speak like an honest man; let him never speak any thing that can injure Chastity or Integrity; let him keep close to the Sentiments which the severest Honour can inspire; and let nothing ever appear in his words that may raise a question of his Probity and Truth; let him speak so that People may believe him to speak true as often as he speaks, through an assurance, that he is not capable of imposing. No man can ever err with so good Principles. It

* Ne qua suspicio gratiae sit, ne qua simularis, Cic. de Orat.

is by so pure a Method that *Thucydides* did set up the Reputation of his sincerity through all following Ages, and that he has deserv'd the Credit of all People. It is his Zeal for Religion, and Respect for the Gods, which appears in all *Xenophon's* Books, that engages People not to question what he says, being perswaded; that a man, who has the Love of Piety so deeply engraven in his heart, cannot lye. *Polybius* takes more liberty: He relates, as Fables, the Sentiments People had of the Gods, and of Hell; thinking, that way, to destroy them. And it is rather by his Honesty that *Livy* perswades, than by his great Capacity: through all the Intrigues, Interests, Passions, and other Extravagancies of those men he speaks of, there appears a Probity, which shews him as well honest as a good *Historian*. One may perceive in the most hidden parts of the Hearts of those he describes, the bottom of his own; and amongst the false

K

lights

lights he discovers in their Conduct, he never has any false aims; he judges of all things rightly, his Judgment being as true as his Intentions are just. *Tacitus* is not of that Character; he is a great shuffler, who hides a very bad Mind under a very great Wit: he mistakes always true Merit; because he hardly knows any other than that of Ability; and it is Policy more than Truth, makes him speak, besides his want of Charity towards his Neighbour: When he speaks of the Gods, he shews neither Piety nor Religion, as is seen in his Discourse upon Fate against Providence, *lib. 6. Annal.* and imputes all things to Fortune, and the Stars, concerning *Trafullus*, Astrologer to *Tyberius*, who was become his Secretary at *Caprea*. So difficult it is for an ill man to be a good *Historian*; for they are almost the same Principles of the one and of the other. So when an Author takes his Pen, he takes upon himself the

the Character of a Publick Man; and he strips himself of that Honour, whensoever he takes up the Sentiments of a Private Person, to regard himself, and to revenge his own quarrels; as *Procopius*, who being dissatisfied with the *Emperour Justinian*, and the *Empress Theodora*, gives way to his own Passion; and corrupts Truth: Or, to follow private prejudices, as *Eusebius* and *Theodorite*, which made use of their *Histories* to establish their own Errors: Or, to flatter those whom you mean to please, as *Buchanan*, who in his *History of Scotland*, blemishes the Honour of *Mary*, to gratifie *Queen Elizabeth*; and as *Fra Paolo*, who makes his *History of the Council of Trent* a Satyr against the *Church of Rome*, and Religion; where he shews a Chain of Investives upon Investives, to revenge himself upon the Pope, because he had not made him a Cardinal, after the hopes he had given him of it. *Paulus Jovius* was a man that

pursued his Interests, Pensioner
 to *Charles* the Fifth, unjust, ma-
 licious, a great Flatterer: The
 Pictures he made of the most
 considerable Persons in his *Histo-*
ry, are Pieces which he pick'd
 up to compose the Lives of Il-
 lustrious Men, on purpose to get
 Money; they are done according
 as he was pay'd for them. *Gui-*
chardin is angry with *France*; *San-*
doval makes *Charles* the Fifth a
 most Catholick Prince, whilst
 that Monarch foments *Hereſie* in
Germany: all this because *Paulus*
 the Third had vex'd him. *Ca-*
brera praises *Philip* the Second for
 his Piety, who favour'd *Eliza-*
beth against *Mary* of *Scotland*,
 which he hindred from being
 Queen, because she favour'd the
French; and so overthrew the
 Catholick Religion in *England*.
Herrera is a *Fanſaroon*, and is par-
 tial to his Nation. In ſine, there
 are hardly any *Historians*, but
 have their own Inclinations and
 Aversions: It goes hard with
 them to alter their Sentiments,
 and

and they make *Elogiums* by Directions, or Satyrs, as their own Minds are disposed. There are but few like *Thueydides*, who by a Principle of Right and Equity, praises *Pericles*, as he deserves, tho' he had us'd him very ill; and does always Justice to the *Athenians*, who banished him to *Thracia*, where he died. It is a man without Passions, who proposes to himself only the Judgment of Posterity, for the Mark he aims at, and his Work, and who has no other desire than that of Truth; wherein he is an honestest man than all others; for he never renounces his Probity. *Livy* favours *Pompey* more than *Cæsar*, *Dio* favours *Cæsar* more than *Pompey*. *Ammianus Marcellinus* is an everlasting Worshipper of *Julian* the *Apostate*, but cries out always against *Valentinian*, his Successor, because he was a Christian. *Eusebius* never shews *Constantine* but on the right side; *Zozimus* shews him always the other way. *Procopius* made

*Marcellin. in
ejus Vita.*

his Idol of *Bellizary*, *Egynhart* of *Charles the Great*, *Sandoval* of *Charles the Fifth*, *Strada* of *Alexander Farneze*: In a word, each *Historian* makes himself an *Heroe* after his own palate, whom he looks upon as his *Creature*; and that he might make him appear the better, he studies to make him more admirable. It is this which renders most *Histories* suspicious, all *Historians* being passionate; and there being hardly any sincere ones, because there are few disinterested. Those that are above Interest, let themselves be blinded with the desire of pleasing; and the care they have of their *Reputation*, leads them into other Extreams.

* *Josephus* non tam studebat, vera scribere, quam credibilia: hac causa fuit cur præterierit miracula, quod apud Infideles fidem non erant habitum, &

* *Josephus* in the *History* of the *Jews*, suppresses true Miracles, to manage the *Gentiles*, who would not have believ'd them; and supposes things less true, because he thought them fitter for the palates, and according to their

narravit fabulas, quas putavit iis magis probabiles futuras. *Leo Cass.* disp. de transl. sacr. leg. c. 36.

apprehension. An *Historian* ruins himself, if he thinks to be establish'd that way: you must say things as they are; woe to the unbelievers: For nothing is worse in a man who professes to give an account of Truth to the Publick; than to profane it thus. In fine, let nothing slavish appear, nor of Cowardice, in the Sentiments or Inclinations of the *Historian*; for nothing gives a worse Opinion of his Probity. But tho' I do not approve the Flatterers of Great men, as *Eusebius*, who shews nothing in *Constantine* but what deserves praises, who nevertheless had great failings; my Opinion is, that they ought to be forgiven in some things: For tho' one ought to speak nothing but what is true, yet he ought not to say all the Truth. *Quintus Curtius* might have let alone the Infamies he related of *Alexander*. There are some priviledg'd Heads which a body ought to respect; let us speak of them handsom-

ly, and not irreverently: We may expose their Faults, but it must be in a way that does not scandalize their Dignity, nor hurt the Respect due to their Grandeur. *Tacitus* says so many dirty things of *Tyberius*, that *Boccalinus* cannot suffer him. That which *Lampridius* tells of the Emperours *Heliogabalus* and *Caracalla*, makes his *History* contemptible; and *Platina* shews but little judgment in his manner of treating the *Popes*. All the World will not be of my side, but wise men will; and I am persuaded, that what Merit soever there is in being sincere, a man would render himself ridiculous to be so in all things. But, as an Author never praises well, unless he does it nicely, so he that bestows his Commendation upon meaner Actions, and not upon those which are essential, and which appear praiseworthy, shall always find the Publick out of humour, because it will never endure those praises

ses

les which it does not find justly bestow'd : Therefore good Sense advises never to praise , but by a sincere account of praisable Actions. * All the World knows * *Luc. de Conser. Hist.* the Adventure of *Aristobulus* , one of the Captains of *Alexander* , who read to him the History of the Battel which that Prince fought against *Porus*. *Alexander* , who was then in his Barge upon *Hydaspus* , enrag'd with the Flatteries of that *Historian* , snatch'd the Book out of his hands , and threw it into the River ; adding , that he deserv'd to be serv'd so too , for being so impudent as to praise him so ill , by attributing to him false Conquests , as if there had been want of true ones. This is very near the Morality I could wish in an *Historian* ; or , at least , it would be my Principle , in case I had the Fancy to write *History* , and that I were of a Genius good enough for it. I would , in fine , be so modest , that there might appear

pear Honesty, and never Vanity in my Sentiments; which makes me to have no patience with the Extravagancy of that *Historian Photius* speaks of, who preparing himself to write the *History of Alexander*, promises, that his Style shall not be worse than the Actions of his *Heroe*. After all is done, it makes a man lose almost the Fancy of writing, if he has any Sense, when he sees the judgment *Dionysius Halicarnassæus* made of *Thucydides's History*; for there is no judicious Author, but that Critick will make him tremble. These are the Notions I got to my self in reading *Histories*. I am not so vain as to pretend to give them for Maxims: They are only thoughts, and perhaps but ill digested, which may become good by the good use that may be made of them. Here follow the Sentiments one may have upon the most considerable *Historians*.

XXVIII.

Herodotus is the first who has given a reasonable form to History; and his merit is, to have led the way to others. His Style is pure and eloquent. * *Athenæus* praises him for the Charms of his Discourse. His Subject is great and vast; for it compasses Nations, Kingdoms, Empires; the Affairs of *Europe* and *Asia*. He is not very exact in what he says, because he contains too much matter; but I find in him a sincerity which is not very common, because he uses *Greeks* and *Barbarians*, his own Countreymen and Strangers, without any shew of Partiality. * I find *Plutarch* deals with him too rigorously, when he makes him to have an ill meaning in most part of his Conjectures; but it is only Envy and Revenge makes him use him so, because he used ill his Countrey of *Bæotia*, in his

Judgment of Historians.

* *Dulcis, candidus, fustus Herodotus. Fab. l. 10. c. 1. Athen. l. 3,*

* *Platarch. de malign. Herod.*

* Laudatur ab omnibus utrumque explicator sincerus & gravis; hujus nemo neque verborum, neque sententiarum gravitatem imitatur. Cic. de opt. Orat.

his *History*. * *Thucydides* is exact in his way of writing, faithful in things he relates, sincere, and not sway'd by Interest: he has Greatness, Nobleness, Majesty in his Style; he is always strict, but his strictness has nothing but what is great in it: The Truth is, that his Subject is lesser, and more limited than that of *Herodotus*. It is only through a Spirit of Partiality, that *Dionysius Halicarnassæus* prefers *Herodotus* before *Thucydides*, the first being his Countreyman: For my own part, I find him the most accomplish'd *Historian* among the *Greeks*. *Xenophon* is pure in his Language, Natural, agreeable in his Composition; his Mind is easie, rich, full of a deep knowledge, a clear imagination, a just turn; but he is neither great nor elevated. Good Manners are not always well observ'd in his *History*, where he makes ignorant and brutish People speak like Philosophers. *Cicero* tells us, that *Scipio* could not
part

part with him, when once he had him in his hands: *Longinus* gives it as his Character, That he conceiv'd things happily. After all is done, he is a well-accomplished *Historian*; and it was by the reading of his *History*, that *Scipio* and *Lucullus* became so great Captains. *Polybius* discourses well; he is provided with good and fine Materials, but he does not manage them so well as the others I spoke of but now: He ought, for all that, to be prais'd for the Idea *Brutus* had of him, who at the height of his Misfortunes, did pass whole Nights in the reading and studying of them. His Design is not so much to write an *History*, as an Instruction how to govern a Countrey, as he himself says at the end of his First Book; and he leaves there, in a manner, the Character of an *Historian*, which obliges him to make a kind of an Apology in the beginning of the Ninth Book, about his way of writing *History*: his Style is much neglected. *Dionysius*

us *Halycarnassæus* shews, in his Book of Roman Antiquities, a deep Sense, Learning and Conduct, which is not common; he is exact, diligent and judicious, truer than *Livy*, and of great weight: But, to conclude, he is very tedious in his Speeches. *Diodorus Siculus* is a man of great Character; but he contains too many things, pretending to make an Abridgement of *Philistus*, of *Timæus*, of *Callisthenes*, of *Theopompus*, and others. *Philo* and *Josephus* are Authors of an extraordinary Eloquence: They were both *Jews*, who had too great a desire to please *Pagans*, by accommodating themselves like Slaves to their Humour and Taste. *Arrian* does but Copy *Xenophon*, and is an affected Imitator of his ways: he has made Seven Books of the Conquests of *Alexander*, as *Xenophon* did of *Cyrus's*: *Appianus* dabbl'd in all the *Greek Historians*, and with that hodge-podge has made to himself a Style which resembles no bodies. *Scaliger* calls him the Thief of *Histories*; he took

took the best of his Book out of *Plutarch's*: but, after all, there is in him a vast deal of matter. *Dio Cassius* crack'd his Credit with almost every body, because of the extraordinary things which he writes without any distinction: for instead of cleaving strictly to the Truth, he runs from the very appearance of it, in that place of the 66th Book of his *History*, where he says, That *Vespasian* cur'd a blind man by spitting upon his Eyes. *Procopius* is exact in what he says, because he accompanied *Belisarius* in the Wars, and was an Eye-witness of his great Actions: but he is too dry in his *History of Persia*, which looks more like a Journal than *History*. He satisfied his own Fancy by writing that private *History*; but his Modesty was great in his suppressing it: for the thing which he took pains to hide during his Life, was made publick after his Death; wherein he is not altogether inexcusable. Most part of those who have written the *History*

Story of Byzantium, either took Copies one by another, as *Agathias*, *Cedrenus*, *John Curopalatus*; or are not very exact; and they come nothing near the Dignity, the Nobleness, the Distinguishing, and the Faithfulness of the Ancient *Greeks*. * Amongst the *Latins*, *Salust* looks great, exact, of an admirable Judgment. No body ever express'd the sensible, exact, severe Style of *Thucydides*, better than he. † He is stiff sometimes in his Expressions, but not insipid: his being so short, makes him less clear: His Method is good, and he gives weight to every thing he says: His Thoughts are always fine, tho' his Manners be bad; declaring always in Commendation of Virtue, and Detestation of Vice. I find him a little too peevish with his Countrey, and ill affected to his Neighbour; but, for all that, he is a very great man. *Cæsar* had the finest way of expressing himself that ever was. Pedants are in the right in admiring him, for the inimitable purity

* Subtilissimus brevitatis artifex *Salustius*, proprietatum in verbis retinentissimus. *Gell.*

† *Salustius* homo nequam, sed gravissimus alienæ luxuriæ objugator. *Last. l. 2. de fals. Rel.*

rity of his Style; but I still admire him the more, for the exactness of his Sense, no body having ever written better. He is almost the only Author that is free from Impertinencies. He speaks of himself but as an indifferent body, and nothing disagrees in the wise Character he has taken. It is true, that he is not altogether an *Historian*, but it is true too, that he is a fine Model to write *History* by. It is a great Honour for that incomparable Author, that *Henry* the Fourth of *France*, and *Lewis* the Fourteenth have busied themselves in the translating of his *History* of the *Gaules*. *Livy* is the most accomplish'd of all, because he has all the great Parts of an *Historian*; the Imagination fine, the Expression noble, an exact Sense, with an admirable Eloquence. None but great Idea's come in his Mind; he fills the Imagination of his Readers with what he says: that way he gains People's Hearts, and moves their Souls;

* In *Tito Livio*
putat inesse
Pollio quan-
dam Patavini-
tatem. Fab.
 l. 8. c. 1.

and, he has the greatest Genius for *History*, and is one of the greatest Masters of Eloquence that ever was. * I do not apprehend *Asinius Pollia's* meaning, who attributes him a Country Air, which smells of *Lombardy*. His great strength is, to make People taste what he says, by drawing his Readers to his own Sentiments, by infusing into their Minds his Fears and his Hopes, giving them all his Passion by the Art he has of moving the most hidden Springs of Hearts. *Tacitus* describes things in a way quite different from others; but he sticks too close to great things, to avoid falling into small ones, which ought not to be neglected. His thoughts are good, but he is not always happy enough to express himself neatly. He is too much a Philosopher. He speaks highly of every thing: If mens Destiny was in his hands, he could not speak otherwise: and he moralizes always upon other People's foolishness: and that he may spare no body,

body, he detracts from all Mankind. How many Spirits has he spoil'd by the desire of studying Politicks, which he inspir'd so many People with, and which is the vainest of all Studies: 'Tis that ruin'd so many Spaniards, as *Antonio Perez*, and so many Italians, as *Machiavel*, *Ammirato*, and others. It is only by the fineness of his Style, that this last pleases so much those of strong minds, and so little those that are not so; for he gives distasts by the subtilty of his Discourses and Reflections. He is so obscure in his Expressions, that a man must be extreemly vers'd in his Style, to know how to unwrap his Thoughts. * His manner of Criticising is fine of it self; but his constant censuring of all things makes it become course. He is elevated, because his thoughts are always high mounted: It is only that way that he imposes; and it is not so much to please, and to instruct, that he writes, as to make himself be admir'd: he has something extraordinary, which causes

* Evenit nonnunquam & aliquid granda inveniat, qui semper quarit quod nimium est. *Fab. l. 2. c. 13.*

People to excuse most part of his failings. But there are so many things to be said of that Author, good and bad, that there is no end in speaking of him. It is a kind of Wit, which is of use only for a shew; that does not fit the ordinary Commerce of men. *Quintus Curtius* deserves praises for his being sincere: he says what is good and bad in *Alexander*, and never suffers the Merits of his *Heroes* to prevent him. If there be any thing to be found fault with in his *History*, it is, that it is too nicely finish'd. But for all that, he did excell in the Descriptions of Manners, which he has done with an Air agreeable and natural. That Character of Perfections which is found in those great Men, was lost in the following Ages. *Justin*, who became a Compiler, thinking to erect himself to an *Historian*, does only touch things as he passes by. He knows a great deal; he says things sensibly; and he collected many Actions, which otherwise might have been lost. Most part
of

of the Authors, *Historia Augustæ*, fix'd their Minds to write Lives; as *Plutarch* and *Herodian* amongst the *Greeks*, *Suetonius* and *Cornelius Nepos* among the *Latins*; and so lost the Character of *Historians*. There came nothing after that, but single *Chroniclers*, *Copiers*, *Compilers*, and such whose Names were known by a course knowledge they gave of their Ages, to whom the Planet of *History* was not very favourable, having nothing fine nor reasonable in them. There was but little Truth found in the Modern *Greeks*, who became *Visionaries*, and related extraordinary Adventures, to please their own Fancies. The Love of Study, which flourish'd again in the late Ages, reviv'd again a number of good and sensible *Historians*, who by studying Ancient Authors, and ruling themselves by them, gain'd more Reputation than their Predecessors. Among those that excell'd then, that which is peculiar to *Commines*, is, that he wrote with good sense and sincerity. *Paulus Æmilius* speaks purely, but is superficial:

Pau-

Paulus Jovius follows only his Passion and his Interest: *Machiavel* is exact enough in his *History of Florence*; his Wit carries it above his Judgment in the rest. He does not do Justice entirely to *Castruccio Castrucci*, whom he treats as an Enemy of his Countrey. *Mariana*, in his *History of Spain*, was out-done by no Modern, neither for the Greatness of the Design, nor for the Nobleness of the Style. *Buchanan* is a little too much like a Slave in his imitating of *Livy*. He stole from the Ancients what he has that is good. He writes very sensibly, yet has not his thoughts elevated. His long Quotations in the Third Book, do not please every body, no more than the large account he gives in the Second Book of the Notion of the Countrey he speaks of. The *Germans* have vast Projects about their *Histories*, and nothing reduc'd into the Natural Order, which an exact Design requires. One may find in most part of the *Spaniards* a Spirit of Partiality for their Countrey, which renders them much suspected.

pected. The *Italians* are rich in particular *Histories* of the several States which compose *Italy*; but they have no compleat Body of *History*. There begins to appear amongst us some beams of hopes to have some accomplished *Historian*, by the approbation the Publick gives to those that write now.

FINIS.

MUSEVM
BRITAN
NICVM

